

TOUCHSTONE OF TRUTH,
APPLIED TO
MODERN ABOLITION;

**OR SEVEN LECTURES IN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION, "WHAT DO
THE SCRIPTURES TEACH ON THE SUBJECT OF SLAVERY.**

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PREFACE

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"RESOLVED, That a political union in any form between a slaveholding and a free community, must necessarily involve the latter in the gulph of slavery. Therefore,

RESOLVED, That secession from the present United States Government is the duty of every abolitionist, since no one can take office, or deposite a vote under its constitution without violating his antislavery principles, and rendering himself an abettor of the slave holder in his sin.

RESOLVED, That fourteen years of warfare against the slave power, have convinced us that every act done in support of the American Union rivets the chains of the slave—that the only exodus of the slave to freedom, unless it be one of blood, *must be over the ruins of the present American church, and the grave of the present Union.*

RESOLVED, That the abolitionists of this country, should make it one of the primary

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objects of their agitation, to dissolve the American Union. (*Resolutions adopted by the American Antislavery Soc. See N. Y. Obs. May 25, 1844.*)

The above is the latest developement of the amiable spirit of modern abolition. This may be regarded as a proclamation of war by the vanguard of the abolition army against heaven, and earth. The different platoons in the rear are advancing bravely on. Soon they will all be in file with the front rank. Then look for deeds of daring from their combined puissance.

The author foreseeing this result deemed it proper to instruct the respected people of his charge on the subject, that they might be able to take Bible ground in the approaching conflict. Hence, the following lectures. They were prepared without any idea, in the first instance, of publication. As they were delivered, a strong desire was manifested, by individuals, for whose judgment he has a high regard, to have them given to the public. It is in compliance with this desire that they now appear before the reader.

It is not pretended that the whole subject is exhausted in the course of these lectures ;

on the contrary many questions both incidental, and direct, for the sake of brevity, have been passed over in silence. The simple object aimed at, is to present a biblical view of some leading points pertaining to the matter under discussion. The preceding resolution adopted by the American Antislavery Society at their recent anniversary in the city of New York, are in evidence that the time has come, when the friends of truth and order should speak out, and be heard. Their too great forbearance, and almost entire silence hitherto, have but emboldened fanaticism, and distracted the minds of many persons, who have had neither time, nor opportunity to give the subject a thorough investigation. The great body of the people, he is fully satisfied, will go with the Bible, if they can clearly ascertain what the Bible teaches in relation to slavery. The following lectures are a small contribution on the subject, designed to aid the candid inquirer after truth and duty. That their tendency may be the promotion of this object, is the earnest wish and prayer of the author.

Ovid June. 29, 1844.

LECTURE I.

DID SLAVERY EXIST AMONG THE JEWS IN THE DAYS OF MOSES?

LEVIT. XXV. 44, 45, 46.

“Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the Heathen, that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land; and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession, they shall be your bondmen forever; but over you brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigor.”

SLAVERY has been the political condition of a large portion of the human family, in every age of the world. The rigors, and sufferings of this condition among the nations of the earth, not influenced by divine revelation, are always great and extreme. This, together with all other evils of humanity, becomes ameliorated by the influence of revela-

ed truth, the tendency of which is, ultimately to banish all sorrow from the human bosom. The law, as well as the gospel, looks directly to the abolition of the institution of slavery, as it does to the abolition of all other civil institutions, that bear unequally upon the rights of man. The two precepts of the law ; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself," constitute the very spirit and essence of the gospel. If the law could have had its legitimate influence upon the hearts of men at the time it was promulgated, it would have produced all the benign results upon the condition of humanity, that the gospel will ever effect, that is to say, the gospel will never make men better than the law requires them to be. There is however this difference, the law is a simple statement of what is right, without of itself, ministering to the creature under law, any aid to do right. The gospel reaffirms what is right, and ministers divine assistance, by which the fallen creature may be enabled to do right. These things being so, divine revelation is, at all times, the only antidote to human woe. And wherever and by whomsoever it is enjoyed, the suffering con-

dition of human beings, begins to be ameliorated. It does not in any instance effect immediate freedom from all sorrow but it assuages that sorrow, and tends to ultimate deliverance from it. Revelation, did mitigate the evils of slavery under the old testament dispensation, though it did not eradicate the institution. The tendency is the same under the gospel, only more powerful in proportion to the superadded light, which it furnishes. The promised result of deliverance from this, and all other evils, is a matter of certainty, where christianity is fully received, and practically obeyed.

Moses the divine law-giver in his day found slavery existing, and prevalent among the Jews and all the surrounding nations, as a civil institution of long standing, and of immemorial custom (*See Michaelis' Com. Laws of Moses.*) The Patriarchs had all been slaveholders. Abraham had souls in his possession before he left Haran, and he brought them into Canaan with him. In Canaan he had a large house-hold of slaves, of those that were bought with his money, and of those, that were born in his family. Hager the maid servant of Sarai was a bond wo-

man, and what in slave-holding regions is called a family servant. Moses undoubtedly saw the evils of slavery. But it existed among the people as a civil institution incorporated into all their domestic arrangements, and strengthened by immemorial usage.—The question with a wise legislator, and one who was under the direction of the God of love and mercy, was, which would be the greater evil of the two, entirely to abrogate the institution, or suffer it to remain under certain restrictions, which would in some degree mitigate the evils of bondage? Civil institutions of long standing, can never be suddenly abrogated with safety to the public. All attempt of this kind end usually in revolution, revolution in anarchy, and anarchy in a state of things infinitely worse than that which had previously existed. For all great changes in the civil condition of men, the public mind must be gradually prepared, or the result will be an entire disruption of all the bonds of society, and the introduction of untold, and almost interminable miseries. Moses therefore, saw that it would be best both for the master and the slave to suffer the institution to continue, and add such regula-

tions in regard to it as would make the condition of bondmen more comfortable than it had previously been. This course he pursued, not alone in regard to the institution of slavery. There were other consuetudinary laws of the Jews of long standing and of evil influence, which he treated in a similar manner. He suffered them to remain, and either added restrictions to correct some of their evil influences, or left them to be regulated by the general spirit of his laws. Of these, were the law of retaliation, the law of divorce, and the law of concubinage all of them injurious in their effect upon general society, but so incorporated into all the habits of the community that it was not safe to abrogate them.

That Moses saw the evils of slavery is manifest from the regulations, which he made in behalf of the Israelites who had themselves been slaves in Egypt. "If thy brother that dwelleth by thee," he says, "be waxen poor and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond servant, but as a hired servant and as a sojourner he shall be with thee and shall serve thee unto the year of Jubilee." (*Lev. xxv. 39, 40.*)

There is a plain distinction between an Hebrew, who through poverty had sold himself, or had been sold, and an ordinary slave, or bondservant. The Hebrew was to be treated with more lenity and as a hired servant. According to Exodus 21, Chap. the Hebrew servant could not be retained but six years. On the seventh year he had his freedom. If he had sold himself, and wife, and family, they all obtained their freedom at the same time. If he was unmarried when he sold himself, and his master had given him one of his slaves for a wife, then he only obtained his freedom at the end of six years; his wife and children still continued in bondage. An Hebrew according to the laws of Moses, could not be retained in slavery even under its mildest form, longer than six years, except in the following instances. "If the servant," says Moses, "shall plainly say I love my master my wife, and my children I will not go out free : Then his master shall bring him to the judges, he shall also bring him to the door, or to the door post, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him forever." (*Ex. xxi. 5, 6,*) A poor Hebrew might also sell himself and family to a

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stranger dwelling in the land. In that case it was the privilege of his near relatives to redeem him. In case they failed to redeem him, he obtained freedom for himself and family at the Jubilee. (*Lev. xxi. 47, 54.*) In no instance could a Hebrew remain in bondage more than six years except in the cases above referred to.

Far different was the condition of the bondmen procured from the surrounding nations, and from the strangers, that dwelt in the land. The year of release, that set the Hebrew free made no change in their situation. They were to all intents and purposes slaves held to service in perpetuity. We are not to regard the law of Moses at the head of this discourse as a new enactment on the subject of slavery, but simply as a recognition of the law, which he found already existing among the Jews and which had existed from time immemorial. This law he allows to stand just as he found it, with the exception of certain restrictions, which could be safely added, and which would in some respects modify the rigor of its application. It seems quite evident from the modifications of the law in favor of the Israelites that previous to this a

Hebrew might be held in perpetual bondage, and be treated with rigor by a brother Hebrew. In the exceptions to the general law, Moses delivered the Hebrew slave from perpetual bondage, and from rigorous treatment. But for this change in favor of the Jewish slave, it was necessary to assign a reason, which, to the nation at that day was probably satisfactory, and produced a ready acquiescence in the new arrangement. The reason is in the following language; "For they are my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt, they shall not be sold as bond men" that is they shall not be sold into perpetual bondage. "Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor, but shalt fear thy God." (*Lev. xxv. 42, 43, 55.*) But this reason for a change in regard to the Hebrew slave did not apply in regard to other nations, hence Moses made no material change in the law in relation to them.

I. According to the standing law on this subject which Moses recognizes, and incorporates into his municipal regulations, the Jews might;

1. Obtain slaves from the Heathen around them, and from the families of strangers who

dwelt among them, in the usual manner in which slaves were obtained. The manner in which persons became slaves shall be considered under a second head. "Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids which thou shalt have shall be of the Heathen that are round about you, and of the children of the strangers that sojourn among you." Bond service answers precisely to our ideas of slavery, and is distinguished in the laws of Moses from free service which is called hired service, and was entitled to a remuneration. In addition to bond servants, the Hebrews frequently employed hired servants. The law in relation to these is laid down in the following terms. (*Deu. xxiv. 14.*) "Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy whether he be of thy brethren or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates. At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee."

2. The Hebrews might hold these bondmen and bondmaids as property, as a part of their possession in perpetuity. "And they shall be

your possession, they shall be your bondmen forever." These are the exact terms in which the law in relation to this point is expressed. Those of the Heathen under bond service to a Hebrew were just as much a part of his property as the land, which he inherited, or the flocks, which he owned, or the money, which he had laid up in his coffer.

3. The Hebrews might transmit their bond-servants as a perpetual inheritance to their children. "And ye shall take them for an inheritance for your children after you to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever." No language could give a more definite and vivid description of slavery as it now is, and always has been, than that embraced in the above law, which Moses found existing among the Hebrews and which he permitted to remain, and become incorporate in their civil code.

Having thus established the fact that the Jews were slaveholders, that they were so in common with other nations from time immemorial, and that under the wise regulations of a divine lawgiver, they were still permitted to be slaveholders: I shall now inquire.

II. Secondly how in ancient times men be-

came subject to bondage. The law states that Hebrews might obtain bondmen of the Heathen roundabout them and of the families of the strangers that sojourned among them. To this statement there are some exceptions. The Canaanites could not be held in slavery by the Hebrews. Slavery however undesirable the condition of it may be, was a privilege, which under existing circumstances, they might not enjoy. Such was their bad faith, the greatness of their numbers, and their deep rooted idolatry, that had they been incorporated under any circumstances into the Hebrew commonwealth, they would have endangered their existence as the people of God. Death or banishment was the only doom that awaited them. (*com. Deu. xx. 16, 17.*) Those of them who surreptitiously obtained a treaty of alliance with the Jews, were reduced to the condition of public or state slavery. And Joshua made them that day, hewers of wood, and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord. (*Josh. ix. 27.*)

The methods, in which men lost their freedom in ancient times, were so various, that it would not be proper to assert of any one of

them, that it was the first, or chief occasion of slavery. All that can be safely done is to notice some of the principle ways in which they were brought into a state of bondage.

1. Captivity in war. By many, this is supposed to have been the origin of slavery. Warfare in ancient times, and especially among people of savage habits, was cruel and exterminating. If the conquered were not all slain on the field of battle, if some of them were taken captive, they were usually reserved to a more lingering and bitter death. The era, therefore of reducing their captives to a state of bondage, instead of torturing them to death, marks an improvement in the character of warfare. Reasons of state sometimes require the extermination of an enemy. Thus Moses directs the Israelites to destroy all the male population of those cities against which they went to war in case they refused to make a peace, saving alive only the woman and little ones for bondage. (*Deut.* xx. 14, & 21. 10,) When a great number of captives were taken they were sometimes divided among the victors according to their rank, (*Num.* xxxi, 31, 40.) sometimes sold at auction to the highest bidder and the avails

of the sale were put into the public treasury.

2. Debts were another occasion of slavery, especially when they were so large, that the debtor was unable to pay them. Among the poor Hebrews a slavery of six years continuance from this cause often occurred. But when a Heathen sold himself to pay his debts there was no law for his release, and his bondage would continue perpetually, unless limited by special contract. But if the amount owed was large, it would be seldom possible to obtain a contract limiting the term of service. (*Neh.* v. 4, 5,)

3. Slavery was sometimes the consequence of theft. If the thief when taken was not able to restore the amount of property stolen, he was to be sold into bondage. (*See Ex.* xxii. 3.)

4. Children, who were born of parents in slavery, themselves became slaves. (*Eccle.* ii. 7,) Thus Abraham had 118 born in his house, who as being more attached to his person than those bought with his money, were armed by him, and went with him to the slaughter of the Chaldean armies at Hoba. Abraham had many bondmen belonging to his family, some born in the house, and

others bought with money of the stranger, as we learn from *Gen.* xxvii. 27 That slavery was the condition of those born of parents in bondage is manifest from the law in *Ex.* xxi. 4. in regard to the Hebrew slave, who went out free on the year of release, but could not take with him his wife, and children. "If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself."

5. Multitudes became slaves by purchase. The opportunities of obtaining slaves for money were many. The Poverty of parents often induced them to sell their children. Thus many of the Jews through poverty had brought their sons and daughters into bondage in the days of Nehemiah from which they were unable to redeem them. (*Neh.* v. 5.) In eastern countries the cupidity of parents frequently induced them to sell their children into bondage. And we need not wonder at this fact, when an inspired Apostle has informed us that Heathen parents are "without natural affection," and when our missionaries inform us that Heathen mothers often sacrifice their children in a most wan-

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ten manner for money, or through the influence of passion. A state of slavery in a well regulated family might be infinitely preferable to the most unbounded liberty, under the corrupt influence of Heathen parents, where they they are subject to the loss of life at any moment from their ungovernable rage. In this way the Hebrews could obtain many bondmen and bondmaids from the heathen around them. There were enough of them at all times ready to sell their sons and daughters for money. The captives of war were many, and were often put up at public auction, and any man might for money purchase as many as he needed. Again in all countries where slavery exists, and where slaves will command money, there will be a strong temptation to manstealing. Men strongly influenced with the love of money, will kidnap an individual in time of peace, and sell him into slavery. Thus Joseph was sold by his brethren to the Ishmaelites, a case that comes as near man stealing as any thing that can be named. We want no stronger evidence, that the Israelites were slaveholders than is found in the severe enactments of Moses against man stealing, since that is a

crime that cannot be supposed to have existence in a community, where slavery is not allowed. (*Ex.* xxi. 16. *Deu.* xxiv. 7.) Slaves might be purchased occasionally from man-stealers, and the purchaser be ignorant of the fact, that the slave had been obtained in this forbidden way. Slaves in ancient times in the east, as they are at the present day, were articles of merchandize, and carried about by traders from nation to nation, and from city to city, like any other article of traffic. Thus the Ishmaelitish merchants purchased Joseph as readily as they would have done a box of frankincense, took him to Egypt, and found a ready sale for him. In this way slaves could often readily be obtained for money. In which of all these ways, Abraham obtained his bondmen we are not able to say, but that he had those in his family who were bought with money is distinctly affirmed.

The price of a slave was different at different times and varied, as it always must with age, sex, health, skill, and ability of the person sold. We may presume from *Ex.* xxi. 32, that the medium price of a slave was thirty shekels. “If the ox shall push a man-servant, or a maidservant, he shall give their

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master thirty shekels of silver and the ox shall be stoned.” And from *Lev. xxvii. 1, 8.* we may form some estimation as to the difference in value of a slave, at different periods of his life.

Having noticed the fact that slavery existed among the Jews, that Moses finding it established by immemorial usage, did not deem it advisable to abrogate the institution, but permitted it to remain under certain modifications ; having also in several instances noticed the manner in which men were brought under bondage, I shall close the subject with a few remarks.

1. We may see from our subject that God sees it not to be best that great changes in human society should be brought about suddenly. If he had seen it to be best, he might have abrogated the institution of slavery among the Jews, which had grown up among them, and was incorporated with all their civil usages, from the time that Abraham their Father had been called out of Mesopotamia. God had a right to abrogate the institution, and was able to do it, and doubtless would have done it, if he had seen it to be best. But to have done it, would have

been a change in the civil condition of a nation, sudden and violent, and calamitous, as such changes have ever proved themselves to be, and contrary to all his ordinary operations in the natural, moral and political world. When God is about to punish a nation for their overgrown iniquities he allows sudden and violent changes to take place in their political condition, when they dash together and are broken in pieces like a potter's vessel. But it may be asked could not God have abolished the institution of slavery and have prevented the evils, that usually result from violent changes? He certainly could, had he seen fit to put forth an exhibition of miraculous power. But God does not govern the nations of the earth by miraculous power, but by ordinary laws. With the same propriety it might be asked could not God convert the whole world instantly without the tedious process of preaching the gospel to every creature, and thus at once heal all the woes of earth? He could certainly, were he to exert his omnipotence miraculously. But God does not even convert the world to himself by miracle. It is by the foolishness of preaching that he saves them.

that believe. God saw that a sudden abrogation of a usage of such long standing would end in revolution, and anarchy, and ruin. Even the change that took place in their condition in leaving Egypt, and encamping in the wilderness though somewhat gradual, and under the outstretched arm of Jehovah, well nigh proved their ruin, and did prove the ruin of a whole generation of them. What might not have taken place, if an immemorial usage entwining itself with all their domestic feelings had been suddenly abolished? We may well suppose that the whole nation would have become extinct.

2. We are taught by our subject, that it is well to look to the consequences of any plan of action which is submitted to our adoption. Some have been pleased to say, with regard to this very subject of slavery that we must act regardless of consequences. Now where there is a clear, distinct and express exhibition of God's will in regard to a specific duty, then we must act and leave the consequences with God. But when the plan of action is one of our own devising according to the best light, which we enjoy, then we are responsible for the consequences. And they must

always be taken into view in the formation of our plan, or the result can be nothing but unmingled evil. Moses acting under the direction of God took into view the consequences of abolishing sundry consuetudinary laws of the Jews, and he saw the consequences fraught with so much evil that he suffered the laws to remain with some few modifications, as the least of the two evils. We must look to the consequences of every plan of action which we adopt, if we would avoid doing evil and involving ourselves in deep guilt before God.

LECTURE II.

CONDITION OF BOND-SERVANTS OR SLAVES, AMONG THE HEBREWS.

GAL. iv. 1. 2. 3.

“Now I say that the heir as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the Father. Even so we when we were children were in bondage under the elements of the world.”

The Apostle here institutes a comparison between a state of freedom, and a state of bond-service, or slavery. He affirms, that a child, though heir to the estate, differeth nothing during his minority from a bond-servant. He has not the liberty of doing as he pleases, any more than a slave until he arrives at the appointed age, when he obtains his freedom. So the Jewish church while under the yoke of ceremonial observances was in a condition resembling slavery, when compared with the liberty of the gospel,

which resembled the condition of freemen. To the minds of the Hebrews this comparison was striking, for they, from time immemorial, had been familiar with the difference between a state of slavery and a state of freedom.

The general condition of slaves in all ages of the world, and in all nations is very similar. Usually their food and clothing are of the poorest description. All their earnings belong to their master, and among the Jews in the days of Moses, the service of a slave was worth double that of a hired servant. In *Deut.* xv. 18, Moses speaking of a Hebrew slave about to obtain his freedom at the end of six years, and directing that he should have presents made to him, says, to the master; "It shall not seem hard unto thee when thou sendest him away free, for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee in serving six year." His service was double in value for two reasons. First the original purchase money, which secured his labor for a term of years, fell far below the sum necessary to secure the labour of a hired servant during the same time. Secondly, though in many respects treated as a hired servant, yet

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doubtless according to standing usage, his master might require more service of him.

Slaves commonly had the consent of their masters to marry, or to connect themselves with a woman in that way, which is by a Latin law-term denominated *contubernium*. The children, that proceeded from this sort of marriage were not the property of the parents, but of their owners, and to distinguish them from those slaves, that were bought with money, they were denominated those, that were born in the house. They however never addressed their owner, as father, but always as lord or master. This custom the Apostle refers to in *Gal.* iv. 6, in the following language. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts crying *Abba, Father.*" Again *Rom.* viii. 15, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, *Abba, Father.*" Here by reference to a well understood and immemorial usage, he represents it as not being the privilege of bondmen or slaves to call their master father. This privilege belonged only to free-born sons.

Although the children born in his house were the slaves of the owner, yet anciently they were as devoted and as true to him, as though they had sustained to him the actual relation of children. This accounts for the fact, that Abraham felt it safe to trust them with arms and train them to war. And what he did in this respect doubtless others of the Patriarchs did also. These bondservants were expected to perform any service, which their master deemed it expedient to require of them, but their chief avocation was that of husbandry, and the tending of flocks and herds. The maidservants were usually employed in domestic concerns. It was the special duty of some of these servants to wait upon their mistress, and of others upon their master. The condition of these was, in many respects, from the nature of their service, less hard than that of others. It may be presumed however that every master, who had any sense of the duties, which every man owes to another whatever his condition, manifested to all his slaves kindness and humanity. This state of things seems to be referred to by Job in the following language as what in his day was due, and expected from

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the master towards his slaves : “ If I did despise the cause of my manservant or my maid-servant when they contended with me, what then shall I do when God riseth up.” (*Job. xxxi. 13, 14.*)

Again the servant who was found to be most capable, faithful and discreet, was placed over the others and called the steward. Thus *Gen. xxiv. 2.* “ And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had.” *Gen. xv. 2,* “ And Abraham said Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus.” This steward had the oversight of all the residue of the servants, appointed them their duties, provided for their subsistence, and managed all the details of business and for his faithfulness herein was rewarded by a continuance in office. (*Luke xii. 42.*)

Having thus glanced at the general condition of slavery I shall now examine what the condition of it was under the laws of Moses. Moses in order to render the condition of those, who had lost their liberty as free from misery, and as favourable as possible, made the following regulations.

1. They were all to be circumcised. This though not an enactment of Moses was a standing law in Israel, which had come down to them from the days of Abraham their Father, and was adopted by Moses as a constituent part of Jewish law. The statute in this case is as follows. "And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generation, he that is born in the house, or bought of money of any stranger that is not of thy seed." Such is the precept, and the following is the practice. "In the self same day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his Son, and all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money, of the stranger, were circumcised with him." (*Gen.* xvii.) These servants of Abraham were not to be consulted, whether they would receive the rite of circumcision, or not, whether they would receive it, or leave his service. The law is positive. They must be circumcised willing or unwilling. This state of things shows us that they had no freedom of their own, even in matters of the highest concern. They belonged to Abraham's household and they must receive the seal of God's cove-

nant with him and his. And this rite in after ages was of special benefit to bondservants as it gave them the privilege of enjoying the Jewish festivals, in which, no uncircumcised person might participate. In many instances no doubt, it had an excellent moral effect upon them in leading them to the worship of the true God.

2. Moses enacted that slaves should be treated with humanity. The law in *Lev. xxv. 39, 53*, speaks expressly in relation to the treatment of slaves, who were of Hebrew origin, and of these only, but as the slave that were bought with money of the stranger, when once circumcised, were to be reckoned among the Hebrews it may be considered as applying in some degree at least to them.

3. Moses admits the right of the master to discipline and coerce his servant yet if he slew him with a rod, or by means of blows while correcting him, he was to be punished for it, but not capitally. "If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished." (*Ex. xxi. 20.*) Here evidently capital punishment is not intended, for in that case according to

the usage of Moses, the language, instead of "He shall surely be punished" would have been "He shall surely die." He shall surely be punished, indicates such punishment as the judge might determine in the case in view of all the circumstances, but not death. Further if the servant did not die under his hand, but continued two or three days and then died of his wounds, the master who beat him was not to be punished at all. "But" says Moses. (*Ex. xxi. 21.*) "Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two he shall not be punished, for he is his money." In this case the design of murdering his servant could not be presumed, and, loss of the servant was considered in the light of a punishment. His servant is his money, and the loss of so much money is assigned as a reason, why he should not be punished when the servant died sometime after he was beaten. This makes it highly probable that the punishment inflicted in case the servant died under his hand was simply a punishment by fine, greater or less as the judges might determine.

4. Moses also enacted, that, if a master injured his servant male or female in eye or tooth, that is according to the spirit of the

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law, in any member whatever, the servant in consequence of such treatment should receive his freedom. [*Ex.* xxi. 26, 27,] “And if a man smite the eye of his servant or the eye of his maid, that it perish, he shall let him go free for his eye’s sake.” “And if he smite out his man servants tooth or his maid servants tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth’s sake.” An admirable law this, and well calculated to restrain the violence of passion in the treatment of slaves. It presupposes the right of the master to use the rod for the infliction of punishment, but it prohibits him from maiming the person of his slave, under the penalty of losing his services altogether.

5. By the laws of Moses slaves were entitled to rest on every sabbath. “The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant” and it is added in *Deut.* where the commandment is repeated, that “thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.” They also had access to, and participated in all the Jewish festivals. They had therefore many seasons

of rest and recreation during the year. Slaves among the Jews were in these respects in point of enjoyment far in advance of slaves among any other people. (*See Duet. xii. 17, 18, also Deut. xvi. 11.*) "And thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant and thy maidservant." When it is considered that these festivals among the Jews were not only seasons of recreation and enjoyment, but also seasons of worship and religious improvement we must see, that the condition of slaves among them, was greatly ameliorated by the humane enactments of Moses. This custom of receiving slaves to the joys of their masters household on festival occasions is evidently referred in the 25th chapter of *Math.* in the parable of the talents distributed. "And so he that had received the five talents came, and brought other five talents, saying Lord thou deliverest unto me five talents behold I have gained besides them five talents more. His Lord said unto him well done, thou good and faithful servant thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee a ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Be-

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cause you have been faithful over a few things, your stewardship shall be increased, more shall be entrusted to your care, and you shall have the privilege of participating in all the joys of your master's family, on those festival occasions which God has appointed for his people.

6. Slaves by the laws of Moses were entitled to an adequate subsistence from those to whom they were subject. This is a fair and legitimate inference from the law in *Deut.* 25. 4, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." Here is a general principle inculcated by a reference to a particular instance. This principle is applied by the Apostle in the 1'st *Ep.* to the *Cor.* to the duty of furnishing adequate support for the ministry. And it doubtless was intended to apply with all its force to the condition of those in a state of servitude. If the Hebrews were bound to treat their dumb brutes with humanity, much more were they bound to treat their bondservants with humanity, and furnish them with food and raiment necessary for their comfort. We may therefore safely conclude, that slaves among the Jews were bet-

ter fed and better clad, than slaves among any other people.

7. Finally slaves of Hebrew origin were allowed to possess some little property of their own. This may be inferred from *Lev. xxv. 49.* where Moses is speaking of a Hebrew slave, who had sold himself to a stranger. Such a slave might be redeemed before the year of Jubilee. "Either his uncle, or his uncle's son may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him, of his family, may redeem him, or if he be able he may redeem himself." This supposes it possible, that he may even in a state of servitude acquire, and hold property of his own. And this privilege, of holding property of small amount as his own, which belonged to the Hebrew slave, was doubtless in process of time granted to slaves of foreign origin.—When they were faithful, indulgences of this kind would be granted to one and another as the reward of their faithfulness. By and by the privilege would become somewhat general as an incentive to faithfulness. In addition to holding property to some extent as his own, a slave might be the owner of

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slaves. Thus in the days of David, we find Ziba a bondservant of Saul, and constituted the steward of the estate of Mephibosheth, holding in his own right twenty persons in a state of slavery. And manifestly if a slave might have any property as his own, he might hold slaves for they were by the existing laws viewed in the light of property.

Such as the above were the regulations made by Moses to ameliorate the condition of those in bondage among the Jews. Let it be borne in mind, that Moses did not originate this system of bond-service. He found it existing among the people. He simply regulated it, and softened its rigors, as much as the existing state of things would allow. By these laws of Moses, it is seen that the condition of the Hebrew slave was in many respects less rigorous than that of foreign slaves. The Hebrew could not be held to servitude longer than six years. On the Sabatical year he always obtained his freedom, that is to say, the beginning of the seventh year from the time he commenced his service, was to him a Sabatical year, the year of his release. Again in the year of Jubilee all Hebrew slaves obtained their freedom. It

made no difference, whether the slave had commenced his service six years before, or five, or four, or three, or two, or one, on the year of Jubilee, he obtained his freedom.— To this general law there was one exception already alluded to, where the slave at the close of six years for reasons assigned, refused to accept his freedom, and voluntarily submitted to a ceremony, which made him a slave during life.

The condition however of foreign slaves was very different. The law made no provision for their release, nor for the release of their children from bondage. They were held as property, and transmitted with the estate from father to son, and their bondage was perpetual, unless the master saw fit to manumit, a case, that doubtless occurred sometimes in reference to individuals, as a reward for eminent services. And Moses did not prohibit manumission, neither did he enjoin it.

The salutary laws of Moses however in favor of the Hebrew slave, after a little went into desuetude, and the Hebrew master insisted upon holding his Hebrew servant in a state of bondage, just in the same manner as

he held the foreign slave. This state of things is noticed in the 34th. chap. of Jeremiah beginning with the 8th verse. "This is the word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, after that king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which dwelt at Jerusalem to proclaim liberty unto them, that every man should let his man-servant, and every man his maid-servant, being a Hebrew, or a Hebrewess, go free, that none should serve himself of them, to-wit of a Jew, his brother. Now when the princes and all the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that every man should let his man-servant, and every one his maid-servant go free, that none should serve themselves of them any more, then they obeyed, and let them go." This act of justice, was extorted from the Jews in a season of threatened calamity, when the judgments of God were hanging over the city. But they soon repented of the good, which they had done. "But afterwards" says the prophet "they turned and caused the servants and the handmaidens, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids."

“Therefore the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, saying, at the end of seven years let ye go every man his brother a Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years thou shall let him go free from thee; but your fathers hearkened not unto me neither inclined their ear.” The fact here disclosed may serve to show us how difficult it is to change long standing usages in a nation, however just and equitable the change may be. Previous to their coming out of Egypt the Hebrew who had been reduced to a state of bondage found no release from his servile condition. In view of their redemption from national bondage, Moses instituted laws in favour of the Hebrew slave securing his freedom at the end of six years. This law appeared to be acquiesced in at the time, and might have been observed for a short season; how long we know not. But the nation soon relapsed into their former usage. “Your fathers hearkened not unto me neither inclined

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their ear." "And ye were now turned," says the prophet referring to the forecited transaction, "and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name: But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom ye had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids."

In view of the above recited facts, it may be remarked that God does not censure the Jews for holding in bondage foreigners, but Hebrews contrary to the express enactments of the Mosaic law in their favor. Nor is the censure for holding Hebrews in a state of of slavery for six years, for this they might do, but for holding them in perpetual slavery. This was a violation of express law, and throughout the prophets, where the Jews are reprov'd for holding men in perpetual servitude, it is the perpetual slavery of the Hebrews which is the subject of complaint, and denunciation. Of the nations around them, they might procure bondmen and

bondwomen, and retain them in a state of perpetual servitude. They had an express law to that effect. And any construction of prophetic language, which would torture it into a censure against the Jews for holding servants of this description, is not, and cannot be the meaning of the prophet, nor the mind of God. Such a construction arrays scripture against scripture, which is not only absurd but blasphemous.

1. From the foregoing considerations we see further evidence, if further evidence were necessary, that the Jews as well as other nations, held persons in slavery, in a state of perpetual bondage, and that the persons so held were by them, and by the law, viewed in the light of property. The slave, says Moses is his money. It is important however, that we bear in mind that Moses did not institute slavery among the Jews. The institution had existed from time immemorial, and was incorporated into all the frame-work of society. The institution could not be abolished without destroying the nation. Of the two evils the least was chosen. Slavery was suffered to continue.

2. We see the benevolence of God mani-

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fest in the regulations made in favor of those in bondage among the Jews. A seventh portion of their time was given to them as a season of rest from their labors, a solace, of which slaves among other nations knew nothing. Then on the great national festivals, which were of frequent occurrence, the slaves were by express law, invited and allowed to partake in the recreations and enjoyments of their master's family. These added very considerably to the solace and comfort of their condition. Again all slaves, who were born in the house or bought with money were circumcised. This gave them access to the religious privileges enjoyed by the nation. And doubtless also the master who procured his slave to be circumcised, brought himself under a covenant obligation to instruct him in the true religion. This might be inferred from what is said of Abraham in relation to his household. "For I knew him" says the blessed God, "that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." And the result of Abraham's instruction of his household, appears in the character of his

steward, whom he despatched to Mesopotamia on an important mission. He appears to have been eminently pious, and consciously faithful to his master Abraham. The result of such instruction by the master of a household, is seen to advantage, in the intercourse of Boaz with his servants. As he approaches them in the prosecution of their daily labors, he says "the Lord be with you." Their reply to his kind salutation, is, "the Lord bless you." That all the bond-servants were as well instructed, and as kindly treated, as in the two instances here referred to, there is probably no warrant for believing. Yet doubtless, thousands and thousands of the heathen were eternally benefitted by being brought into a state of slavery among the Jews. They there had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the true God, and of learning the way of salvation through a Redeemer. This however is no evidence that God approves of slavery in itself considered, but simply that he is able and often does, bring good out of evil.

LECTURE III.

THE STATE OF SLAVERY IN THE TIME OF OUR SAVIOUR, AND HIS APOSTLES.

1 COR. vii. 20. 21.

“Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it; but if thou mayst be made free, use it rather.”

“CORINTH was long the chief slave mart of Greece, and from its situation was likely to have much communication with Brundisium and the other ports on the eastern side of Italy. Timæus perhaps with some exaggeration asserts, that Corinth, had, in early times before Athens had reached her supremacy, 460,000 slaves. They were distinguished by the name of “*chænix*” measures. Many of them doubtless embraced the gospel, when preached by Paul, Apolos, and others. From the language employed by Paul in describing the social condition of the Corinthian con-

verts, as well as from the developement of the particular vices, to which they were exposed, we reasonably infer that many slaves were converts." (*Bib. Rep. Vol. 6.* 429.) From the language of the Apostle in the text, it is evident beyond a question, that the civil condition of some at least of the Corinthian converts was that of slavery. From this language alone it might reasonably be inferred that slavery did exist in the time of our Saviour and his Apostles. To ascertain what are the facts in the case I invite your attention.

I. To a brief survey of the state of slavery in the Roman empire at the time of our Saviour's advent.

II. To an inquiry into the state of slavery among the Jews at the same period.

1. Let us then take a brief survey of the state of slavery in the Roman empire at the time of our Saviour's advent. The Roman empire was at this time at the zenith of its power. Did slavery exist among the Romans? Long before the days of Moses the civil condition of a large portion of the human family was that of slavery. Such continued to be their condition during his time,

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men by the day or for a longer period for a stipulated sum as a remuneration for their services, was common among the Jews at this time. That bond-service, or slave labour was also common among them at this time, and that they were familiar with the nature of such service is quite as evident because it is frequently referred to both incidentally and directly for illustration.

Take the following from 12th chap. Luke
“ And the Lord said, who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season. Blessed is that servant, whom, his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, my lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to beat the men-servants and the maidens, and to eat and to drink and to be drunken, the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware and will cut him in sunder and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers” or with the unfaithful. The reference here plainly is, to a slave establish-

ment, such as existed at that time among the Jews. Here is the steward appointed over the house-hold. It is just a copy of the steward of Abraham's house-hold. The eldest servant of Abraham ruled over all that he had. So here the faithful and wise steward is made ruler over the house-hold to give them their portion of meat in due season. And this chief servant had under his direction the men-servants and maidens of the house-hold. It is just the picture of a family of slaves with a steward appointed over them, not only to give them their food in due season but to assign to each his proper employment.

Again Math. xxv. 14.—“For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods and to one he gave five talents, to another two and to another one, to every man according to his several ability, and straitway took his journey.” Here the reference is clearly to a slave establishment. In the first place, it is expressly said that they are his own servants, they belong to him, they are his property. In the next place, the whole frame work of

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Though slavery existed among the Jews after their return from captivity, it was much milder in its character than the slavery of other nations. Among the Jews the slave was placed in some measure under the protection of law, and excessive cruelty in masters was restrained. Add to this there was a general tendency in the Mosaic institutions to ameliorate the condition of bond servants. The high and holy principles of the moral law would not fail of having a very considerable influence upon the tone of national feeling, and of diffusing over the public mind in some degree a spirit of kindness. In just so far as this was the case, the condition of bond-servants would be generally improved. But whatever may have been their condition, there is abundant evidence that Slavery existed among the Jews in the days of our Saviour.

The mode of teaching adopted by our blessed Lord during his personal ministry, led him to draw his illustrations from objects with which the people were familiar, and from things with which they were constantly conversant. He often refers to the institution of slavery to illustrate some great princi-

ple of duty. If slavery did not exist among them, as it had done in the days of Abraham and Moses, if the people were unacquainted with the character of the institution, then, in these instances at least, he departed from his usual method of communicating instruction, and the truth which he designed to illustrate must have failed of appearing in that strong light which he was accustomed to throw around all his communications. There was the same state of things among the Jews at this time that existed in the days of Moses. They employed slave-labor and free labor. Thus in 20th Chap of Matt. our Saviour represents a house-holder as going into the market-place and hiring laborers to be employed in his vineyard for a penny a day. Again, the prodigal son says, "How many hired servants in my father's house have bread enough and to spare." He does not say that there were no bond-servants in his Father's house, but simply that he a son, in consequence of his wandering and prodigal habits had reduced himself to a condition worse than that of many of his Father's hired servants. From these references it is quite evident, that the practice of hiring

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Each slave had a separate cell. Some masters allowed well disposed slaves to be better lodged than others. Suetonius informs us, that it had become so common to expose sick slaves on the Isle of Esculapius in the Tiber, that Claudius enacted a law to prevent the barbarity." "The obedience of slaves was enforced by severe discipline. The masters availed themselves of the latitude of the law in this respect to the utmost extent. A blow with the hand was a very ready discipline. The lash and rod were in frequent use." Whips, and thongs were not the most dreadful instruments of punishment. Burning alive is mentioned as a punishment in the Pandects and elsewhere. Cruel masters sometimes hired torturers by profession, or kept such persons in their establishments to assist them in punishing their slaves, or in extorting confessions from them, and horrible torments were employed for these purposes. The noses, ears, teeth or even eyes, were in great danger from an enraged master. Crucifixion was frequently made the fate of a wretched slave for trifling misconduct or from mere caprice. Slaves were valued only so far as they represented

money. Hortensius cared less for the health of his slaves than for that of his fish, and Vedius Pollio actually fed his fish with the flesh of his slaves.

From this brief survey we may easily imagine what horrible atrocities were perpetrated against the defenceless slave population of the Roman Empire. Thrown entirely out from under the protection of law they were delivered over to the will and caprice of their masters. Under these often cruel and ferocious tyrants, their sufferings must have been at all times great, often intolerable and unutterable. But the poor slave had no one to write the history of his wrongs, to count the number of his groans, or measure the ocean of his tears. Though earth has made no record from which we can arrive at a knowledge of all the facts, heaven has a book fully written out. And on the day of doom developements will be made of individual sufferings, which will be astounding to intelligent minds.

Such as above was the condition of the Roman empire in regard to slavery when our Saviour appeared in the world. At this era slavery seems to have reached its highest

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point of enormity. No part of the empire was free from the evil.

2. I proceed in the second place to inquire respecting slavery among the Jews at this time.

Were the Jews themselves slave-holders at the period when our Saviour became incarnate ? Before proceeding to answer this question I wish to make one general remark, which may aid us somewhat in our inquiries. In slave-holding communities the term slave is not the common and ordinary appellation by which those in bondage are designated. It is the term by which their condition is usually pointed out, but not the term which marks the nature of their employment. The term, which indicates their employment, is servant, and by this it is that they are more frequently designated.

It may be presumed that the Jews were slave-holders. The law of Moses which gave them the privilege of holding slaves had never been abrogated. And there is no intimation in history that the nation as such, had declined availing themselves of that privilege. We do find however that when they returned from the captivity of Babylon, they

brought along with them a large number of slaves. The whole congregation says Ezra, was 42, 360, besides their servants and their maids, of whom there were 7,337. That these servants and maids were slaves is manifest from the fact, that they are enumerated as an order distinct from the congregation. A hired servant of Hebrew origin could not be the property of any one, could not be enumerated in a distinct class, but must have been reckoned as belonging to the congregation. That slavery existed among the Jews after their return from captivity is clear from the reference which the prophet Malachi makes to it as a matter well understood among them in his day. (*Mal.* i. 6.) "A son honoreth his Father, and a servant his master. If I then be a father where is mine honor? And if I be a master where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts." Here it is stated to be the duty of a servant to fear his master, which implies that the master had a right to control him, and might punish him in case of disobedience. But such a representation is wholly inapplicable to the relation, which subsists between a hired labourer and his employer.

existed in the time of Claudius about twice as many provincials as there were citizens of either sex, and of every age, and that the slaves were at least equal in number to the free inhabitants of the Roman world."

The slaves were acquired in the usual manner by war, by commerce, by the operation of law, and by being born in a state of slavery. These seem to have been the common modes of acquiring slaves and of perpetuating slavery in every age of the world. These slaves were acquired from all nations, and from all ranks in society. The vicissitudes of war, the most prolific source of slavery, had no respect to nation, tribe, condition, age, or sex. We shall labour under a grand mistake, if we identify slavery with the colored race. Men of all colors, of all nations, of all grades, and of all conditions, have at various times been subject to bondage.

The condition of slaves under the Roman laws was anything but desirable. "All slaves," say these laws, "are in the power of their masters, which power is derived from the law of nations, for it is equally observable among all nations, that the masters have

had the power of life and death over their slaves, and that whatsoever is acquired by the slave is acquired for the master. Whatever our slaves have acquired at any time, whether by delivery, stipulation, donation or bequest, or any other means, the same is reputed to be acquired by ourselves; for he who is a slave can have no property. Masters acquire by their slaves not only the property of things but also the possession." (*Bib. Rep. Vol. 6, p. 419.*) Neither a slave, nor a freed man who had been a slave, were capable of the marriage relation. They might contract alliances, which were denominated contubernia but could not enter those of matrimony. The law affirms that manumission does not change the state of a slave, because he had before manumission no state or civil condition." The Roman laws, it will be seen, stript the slave of all civil immunities and delivered him over to the will of his master.

However wretched and forlorn his condition in law, it was still more so in fact by common usage. "The labourers on a farm were shut up at night in a building called a work-house, but which rather resembled a prison.

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and for ages after, even among the Jews, who of all nations were alone in the possession of those moral institutes, which looked to the eventual abolition of slavery, and tended to ameliorate its hardships. And if it continued with the Jews among whom alone, there was an element in operation designed in the end to correct the evil, much more may we presume, that it still continued among other nations. And when we look into the history of Rome the existence of slavery is quite as prominent a fact as the existence of the empire itself.

On this subject I shall quote somewhat freely from a carefully prepared article in the *Bib. Rep. for 1835. Vol. 6.* The writer say: "If we allow two slaves to each Roman, an average below, that of some Grecian cities, we should not in that case, take into the account those slaves, who were the property of the various orders of freed men, or those, who belonged to other slaves. Rich citizens were very extensive owners of slaves, kept both for luxury and for profit, as domestics of citizens in town, and as labourers on the vast estates in the provinces. Some rich individuals are said to have possessed 10,000, and

even 20,000, of their fellow creatures. Seneca says that the freed-man of Pompey was richer than his Master. The number of slaves that daily surrounded him was like the army of a general. The slaves of Crassus formed a large part of his fortune. His architects and masons alone exceeded 500. Scaurus possessed above 4000 domestic and as many rural slaves.—It was fashionable to go abroad attended by a large number of slaves. (*Horace L. 1. Sat. 3. v. 11.*) Augustus prohibited exiles from carrying with them more than 20 slaves,”

Besides the immense number of slaves owned by individuals, the state and corporate bodies possessed many. Many of the public works among the Romans were constructed by slave labour, and six hundred were employed to guard against fires in the city of Rome itself.

“From the time of Augustus to Justinian, we may allow three slaves to one freeman, we shall thus have a free population in Italy of 6,944,000, and of slaves 20,832,000, total 27,776,000. After weighing every circumstance, which could influence the balance, says Gibbon, it seems probable that there

the parable shows that they are his property. They are not asked whether they are willing to receive these talents. They are distributed to them and they are required to receive them. Not only this, they are required to improve them, and return them again to their master with all the increase, that resulted from such improvement. And the individual, who chose not to act according to directions, was severely punished for dereliction of duty. Now is this the way to treat freemen? What rich man about to journey would have a right to come and thrust his money upon free labourers require them to employ it for his benefit and at his return require them to pay over the original sum not only, but all that had been made out of it? And if one of these free men should not choose to leave his own business and employ himself for the benefit of another what right would that other have, to call him to an account and punish him because he saw fit to mind his own business? Verily on the supposition that these were freemen the whole representation is absurd. But they were not freemen. They were the bond-servants of this lord, and they were under obligation to

receive, and improve the property, which he entrusted to their care, and he had a right by existing laws to call them to an account, and punish them for a failure in their duty. This view of the subject makes the whole structure of the parable consistent and appropriate, and a striking illustration of the important truth which our Lord designed to convey to the mind.

Once more in Luke xix. 12, 13. we have the institution of slavery again referred to for the purpose of illustration. A certain nobleman about to go into a distant country, to receive to himself a kingdom, and to return, calls his ten servants and delivers to them ten pounds, and says to them occupy till I come. At his return he calls them to an account, and punishes the servant, who had failed to obey his directions. This whole representation is utterly at variance with the idea, that these was merely hired servants that they were their own masters, and could do as they pleased. They evidently were not. They were slaves, who were under obligations to do the bidding of their master. If they obeyed his will they secured his approbation, and obtained such rewards for their good

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conduct as was usual for faithful and trustworthy bond-servants. If they failed in obedience they were liable to such punishment as their master saw fit to inflict upon them.

No other relation in the social and civil condition of man, than that of a bond-servant to his master, could furnish so striking an illustration of the absolute supremacy of God over all human beings, and of their obligations to render to him the whole service of their heart and lives. Jesus Christ found bond-service existing among the Jews, as a civil institution, and he frequently referred to it as an apt and striking illustration of God's dominion over us, and of our obligation to him. But the mere fact that our blessed Lord referred to slavery as an existing institution, for the purpose of illustration, is no evidence that he approved of slavery, any more than his commendation of the prudence of the unjust steward, is evidence that he approved of his injustice and fraud, or that he approved of the moral character of the scribes and pharasees when he commanded his disciples to observe and do all whatsoever they bid them, or that he approved of all the principles of the Romnn govern-

ment, when he said "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," or that he approved of the spirit and usages of war, when he referred to it for the purpose of illustrating truth. From the spirit, and tendency of the gospel, which he preached, we have a right to infer that our Saviour did not approve of slavery, or war, or any evil, incident to the civil institutions of men. The gospel is calculated and designed to heal all the evils in the civil condition of man, not by any direct interference with human laws, and long standing usages, but by rectifying the heart, and indirectly through the heart, regulating all intercourse in the relations of life, according to the principles of righteousness. The nature, and design, and tendency, of the gospel are fully expressed in the angelic annunciation: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." Wars will cease from under heaven, slavery will be done away, and every other evil that affects the race. But these evils will only be reached through the medium of a renovated and sanctified heart. The gospel does not propose to reach them in any other way.—First make the heart right with God, and then

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it will be right towards man. And always in proportion as the hearts of men are brought under the benign influences of the gospel, and as the public mind becomes leavened with its spirit, the domestic, the social, and the civil condition of man is improved,—These are facts in the history of the gospel of so prominent a character, that we are warranted in believing, that if the heart of the world were thoroughly pervaded by its spirit, and under its heavenly influence, nothing would offend in all God's holy mountain, and the earth would then be so morally elevated, that it would be a holy mountain the dwelling place of God. Every thing therefore in the condition of human beings, which the gospel is calculated and designed to remove, we may consider a matter, which Jesus Christ does not approve, for if he approves it, why does he remove it. Hence though our Saviour alludes to the institution of slavery and the usages of war for the purpose of illustrating truth, such allusions furnish no evidence that he approves of either war or slavery. The preceeding remarks I think establish the fact with sufficient clearness that slavery did exist at the

time of our Saviour's advent both among the Romans and among the Jews. Indeed there can be no question on the subject, for the evidence is abundant and of such a character that it cannot be disputed.

1. In closing I may be permitted to call your attention to the difference in slavery as it existed among the Romans, and among the Jews. The condition of the Roman slave was miserable almost beyond a parallel.— He was perfectly under the control of his master, who had the power of life and death over him. He was beaten, he was scourged, he was tortured, he was maimed, he was burned to death, he was crucified at the will of his master. The law made no provision for him, threw no protection around him. Even when emancipated he did not become a citizen, he had no state or civil condition. The Jewish slave on the other hand, was comfortably fed and clothed, was placed under the protection of law, had a seventh portion of his time for rest, partook of the joys of the national festivals, and though subject to correction, its violence was restrained, and his person might not be maimed. The difference in favor of the Jewish slave is alto-

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gether owing to the benevolence of divine revelation. Wherever it is enjoyed, the condition of all classes in the community is made better by it. Divine revelation embracing the law and the gospel, is the only sovereign antidote to human woe.

2. Hence I remark secondly, that we should desire most earnestly and fervently to have the gospel preached, and to see it universally prevail, in all slave-holding communities. Just in proportion as it prevails, and its kindly spirit pervades the public mind, in the same proportion the condition of the poor slave is ameliorated, and the morning of his emancipation approaches. The gospel of Christ is the only hope of the slave, in regard to his civil condition. How careful should every man be, who wishes well to the slave, to do nothing which in the remotest degree, would have a tendency to prejudice slave owners against the gospel. Any expression of unkind feeling toward them, any bestowment of harsh and illiberal epithets upon them, any threat of withdrawing christian courtesy and fellowship from them, while it offends the intelligent christian, will bar thousands of impenitent minds, who sustain the relation

of masters, against the gospel of Christ, and should be most religiously avoided. To pursue such a course is to cut off the consolations of religion from the bosom of the slave for time being, and put far away the day of his final deliverance. If slave-holding communities become thoroughly imbued with the spirit of christianity, the abolition of slavery by the voluntary action of slave holders themselves, is just as certain, as that the gospel breaths peace on earth, and good will to man. But until that day, the world will never see slavery abolished. A tyrant power may change the form of servitude, and baptize it with a new name, but the thing itself will still remain. It can never be done away by force. Let all the physical power upon earth bear directly upon it, and it will still remain. Nothing but the spirit of Christ pervading, and controlling the hearts of men, will banish this evil out of the world. He and he 'alone, who does the most to spread the gospel far and wide, to extend the empire of holiness over human hearts, does the most for the abolition of slavery, and all other evils, that affect our suffering race. May that day speedily arrive, when all shall know

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the Lord from the least even unto the greatest, and when nothing shall offend in all God's holy mountain.



LECTURE IV

HOW DID OUR SAVIOUR AND HIS APOSTLES, TREAT THE SUBJECT OF SLAVERY?

JOHN xviii. 36.

“Jesus answered my kingdom is not of this world.”

It is a remarkable fact, and one that deserves serious consideration, that though our blessed Saviour, lived amidst the institutions of slavery, yet from any thing that he said on the subject during the whole course of his personal ministry, had he not frequently alluded to it for illustration, we never would have learned that slavery existed among the Jews. He alludes to it as an existing civil institution with which, the minds of the people were perfectly familiar, just in the manner and for a similar purpose that he alludes to the known practice of warfare. “What king saith he, going to war against another king, sitteth not down first and counteth

whether he be able with ten thousand men to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand, or else while the other is yet a great way off he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace." Here for the purpose of illustrating truth, he refers to warfare as a well known usage among the nations of the earth. Neither when the allusion is made to slavery or war, does he say a word either for or against them as existing usages. He simply refers to them for purposes of illustration. No unprejudiced mind can doubt for a moment that our Saviour alludes to slavery in the New Testament. The pictures there drawn, are the pictures of slave establishments, and of no other. No man in his sober senses, can entertain the belief for a single instant, that any great man, lord or noble has a right to call before him a number of freemen, distribute his property among them, order them authoratively to employ it for his benefit during a specified season, and at the end of that term render him a strict account of the manner in which they had employed it not only, but to render back to him the original sum together with all that had been acquired by

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the use of it. Much less, if any one of them choose to pursue his own business, neglect to employ the money given him, and return it again at the end of the specified term just as he had received it: I say much less would that lord in this case have a right to inflict a severe punishment upon the supposed delinquent. The whole representation is entirely at variance with all our ideas of freedom. But if these servants were slaves, the property of their lord, then they were according to existing laws, under obligation to receive just what money he was pleased to distribute among them, to employ it just as he directed, and to render him a strict account of their conduct in the whole matter. And in case of delinquency they were liable to just such punishment as he saw fit to inflict. The picture is clearly that of a slave establishment and of no other. The Saviour not only draws these pictures which found their counterpart in society around him, but he makes other allusions to the subject more brief in their character. Thus in Luke xvi. 13, he says, no slave *οἰκέρης* can serve two masters. There are two terms, as already noted in relation to this subject,

the one significant of condition, the other of service. In all slaveholding communities the term, which is indicative of service is the one more commonly used. They are both employed in the New Testament but the term significant of service more frequently than the one significant of condition. But the term *Δούλος* when used to signify the service of a slave is usually connected with such adjuncts as to render the meaning quite evident. In many instances the term indicative of service just as clearly points out slave service as if the term were used which is significant of the slave's condition. From the frequent allusions by our Saviour to the subject of slavery, and from the manner, in which those allusions are made it must be quite evident that he lived among a slaveholding people. Yet in all the four Gospels there is not a record made that he spake a word against the institution of slavery as such. This is singular, if slavery is the greatest sin of which men can be guilty, and if it is necessary as some think, to turn the world up side down to eradicate the evil. How shall we account for our blessed Saviour's silence on this subject? We have

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been told that no man can be a christian unless he lifts up his voice like a trumpet, and renders his indignant and burning testimony against all, who are in any way connected with the institution of slavery. Yet Christ lived, and preached in the midst of this institution and never said one word directly against it. How is this? It is all easily explained by the language which he used before Pontius Pilate, and which is quoted at the head of this discourse. "My kingdom is not of this world." He had a greater and more glorious object in view, than interfering directly with the civil institutions of the nations. He "came to seek, and to save that which was lost, to destroy the power of Satan, and deliver men from the bondage of sin." From this great work he would not be diverted to give his attention to minor evils. Full well he knew, that many great and crying evils existed in all human governments, and would exist, until the hearts of men were subdued to God and sanctified by the influences of the gospel. Full well he knew that the best way to eradicate these evils, was not directly to attack them in the citadel of their strength

but to bring the human heart under the control of heavenly love, when all the grievances of men would gradually melt away and disappear. Full well he knew, that if the fountain of human action were once rectified, all the streams that issue from it, would be pure and innocent, and holy. And he knew quite as well, that to emancipate the slave from the fetters of servile bondage would add little to the improvement of his condition while his heart was under bondage to Satan. His great object was to deliver both the slave and his master from the fetters of spiritual bondage, from the slavery of sin, and then as a necessary consequence their social and civil relations would in due time be regulated upon principles of reciprocal equality. The kingdom of Christ is not of this world, it is spiritual in its character, and for this reason he did not interfere with the civil institutions of the world. He said nothing directly against the institution of slavery though living in daily contact with it.

The conduct of our blessed Saviour herein was closely imitated by his Apostles whom he commissioned to go out into all

the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. When in fulfillment of their great commission they had passed the boundary of Judea into the adjoining and more distant provinces of the Roman empire they immediately came in contact with slavery in its most repulsive form. In Judea the rigors of slavery were somewhat broken by the influence of revelation, and it existed here in a milder form than among other nations whose total darkness was unrelieved by any ray of heavenly light. In the Roman Empire slaves had no protection from law, and were entirely at the mercy of their masters. With reference to the intercourse of the Apostles with slaves and slaveholders.

1. We may remark that many slaves were converted to christianity by their preaching. This is sufficiently manifest from the Apostolical Epistles. And probably a large proportion of the early christians were slaves, at least, in some particular locations. This would seem to be fair inference from the language of the Apostle to the Corinthians. "For you see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the mighty, and base things of the world and things, which are despised hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are." That among these designations, slaves are included as well as poor people is evident from what is said in the seventh Chapter of this Epistle, where the Apostle is giving counsel to those in various relations of life : v. 20, 21. " Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant ? care not for it, but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather." The owner of a number of slaves, and many such there were at Corinth, being once converted, would immediately desire the conversion of his servants (such is the nature of christianity,) and would bring them under the reach of gospel influences. Again many a slave having once embraced the gospel might have been the means of conversion to his master. It is clear that there were slaves in the Corinthian Church, and in all probability many such. (1. *Corinth* xii. 13.)

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2. The Apostles never enjoined it upon believing masters to emancipate their slaves, even those of them that were co-members of the same church.* The Apostles direction to believing slaves in the Corinthian Church is evidence of this. He says to the slave be contented with your condition, but if your master is disposed to liberate you, you had better accept of the boon, for a state of freedom is preferable to a state of servitude. But if he should not be disposed to emancipate you, abide still in your servile condition and care not for it. Here it is plain, that the Apostle laid no injunction upon the master to liberate his slave. He might do it, or not do it, just according to his own sense of duty. Herein the Apostle imitated his divine Master, who never interfered with civil institutions. He left it to time and the kindly influence of christianity to

*The pretence that the Apostles did not direct masters to emancipate because it was contrary to existing laws, is idle. Emancipation was so common among the Romans that it became a nuisance and burden upon society. To restrain it, Augustus made a decree that no man should emancipate more than a hundred at a time.

cure the evil. The great and primary object being attained in the conversion of the soul to God, other things are of small account. "For he that is called in the Lord being a servant is the Lord's freeman, likewise also he that is called being free, is Christ's servant." In the Epistle to the Ephesians, vi. 9. the Apostle directs Masters to "treat servants well, forbearing threatening," but he says not one word about emancipation. That slaves are here referred to is evident, from the contrast in the eighth verse, as well as from the adjunct, "forbearing threatening." Again Coll. iv. 1. "Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal knowing that ye also have a master in heaven." Not a word here about emancipation. But say you, you are caught now. He must give unto his servants, that which is just and equal, and that means emancipation. It don't mean any such thing. It is not just and equal according as you understand the terms, but as these masters understood them agreeably to the usages under which they lived. If it means emancipation, why did the Apostle say to these same servants, "Obey in all things you mas-

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ters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God." What command them to obey after they were liberated? This would be contrary to his direction to the Corinthian slave. "If thou mayest be made free use it rather." Why give any direction to the slave if the relation which he sustained to his master was to cease? In all the Apostolic instruction on this subject not a syllable is uttered in regard to the abolition of slavery, not surely because the Apostles desired the continuance of the institution, but because being taught of God they saw it best to leave the whole subject to the benign influences of christianity.

3. The Apostles did not persuade slaves to run away from their masters, nor instruct them to steal their property, nor assist them in their flight contrary to the known laws of the land. Of this we have abundant evidence. Let us turn our attention to what the Holy Spirit teaches on this subject in 1 Cor. vii. 20. "Let every man abide in the same calling, wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it but if thou mayest be made free use it rather."

Here the direction to the slave is to abide with his master, not to run away from him. (*Eph.* vi. 5, 8.) "Servants be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ, not with eye-service as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing a man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." Not a word here about running away, nor about stealing property to assist the flight. On the contrary specific instruction is given to the slave not to defraud his master by neglecting duty as soon as his eye was turned away. (*Coloss.* iii. 22, 24.) "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart fearing God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ." How different this instruction given to the slave by the Holy

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Spirit of God, from that, which advises him to embrace the first opportunity to run away, and to steal whatever comes to hand to aid him in his escape. Again turn your attention to 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren, but rather do them service because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit." Here again we have similar instruction, but not a word about stealing or running away from their masters. Titus ii. 9. "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." Here not only continuance and faithfulness of service is enjoined, but theft is expressly forbidden. Once more. 1 Peter ii. 18, 19. "Slaves," Peter here uses the very term, which is significant of the servant's condition. "Slaves be subject to your masters with all fear, not

only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward for this is thank worthy, if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." The above is certainly proof enough that the Apostles did not advise slaves either to run away from their masters, or to steal their property. That they did not assist them in their flight contrary to the known laws of the land, is also very manifest. First from the doctrine, which they taught in reference to obeying all the enactments of civil law. (1 *Peter* ii. 13, 15.) "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, for so is the will of God that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." (See also *Rom.* xiii.) Secondly it is manifest from a remarkable example, which we have on record. A good-for-nothing slave* by the name of Onesimus had run away from his master Philemon, and went to Rome. There he heard the Apostle preach, was converted, and became a good man. As soon as the Apostle became acquainted with the facts in his case, he sent him directly back

* Phil. v. 2. "To thee unprofitable."

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to his master with a letter written for the purpose of reconciling the master to him, conciliating his favor, and screening the slave from merited punishment, because he was now a penitent and reformed man. The Apostle would not countenance the flight of a slave from his master. It would be contrary to all the instruction which had been given in regard to the duty of slaves and in regard to the duty of all scrupulously to obey the existing laws of the land.

4. The Apostles did not withhold communion from slave holders, or deem it expedient to disturb the peace of the church, or rend it asunder on account of slavery. This is clearly evident from all the instruction, which he gave on the subject both to slaves and to their masters. They would not interfere directly with the civil relations which men sustained to each other, but left those relations to be regulated by the spirit of the gospel. Philomon was unquestionable a slaveholder. Yet the Apostle does not denounce him as a thief, and a robber, nor a black-hearted wretch. Far different from this, is his language. He calls him a fellow-

laborer, and a brother dearly beloved. This Philemon the slaveholder had a church in his house. This church might have consisted of a few near neighbors, his own children, and a large number of his slaves and Philemon might have been their spiritual instructor, which is probable from the Apostles calling him a fellow laborer. Upon them all he pronounces the usual benediction. "Grace to you and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Does this look like withholding communion with him? Neither does the Apostle assert that those who held communion with Philemon could not be christians. He expressly calls them saints though they did commune with the slaveholder. "For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee brother."

In 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. the Apostle calls slave holders faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit, and commands their believing servants not to despise them, but to "Count them worthy of all honor." These considerations are sufficient to show us, that the Apostles did not countenance the with-

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drawment of communion from slaveholders, nor any division in the churches on that account.

5. The Apostle Paul under the inspiration of God, wholly disapproves, and sternly rebukes any, who should teach or act contrary to the instructions, which the Holy Spirit had communicated to the churches on this subject. We have his words definitely expressed in relation to this point in 1 Tim. vi. 1—5. “Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honor that the name of God, and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doating about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the

truth, supposing that gain is godliness : from such withdraw thyself." This is a true picture of all, who in any age teach and act contrary to the instructions of the Holy Spirit. It was true in the days of the Apostle, it is true this very hour. With such persons, Timothy was to have no sympathy. From the evils arising from such instruction and action, he was to clear his skirts by keeping aloof from them.

The sum of the whole matter is this : Jesus Christ though living in the midst of slaveholders, never said one word directly against slavery : the Apostles, when they went out to preach the gospel to every creature, came into immediate contact with slavery in its worst forms, many slaves were converted under their ministry and added to the churches, yet they never commanded the master to emancipate his slaves, nor encouraged the slave to run away from his master, nor to steal his property, nor did they assist them to escape contrary to the known laws of the land. They merely said to him "If thou mayest be made free use it rather." If thou mayest be free by legal manumission use the privilege nevertheless to be a freeman

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of Christ is infinitely more important : nor did they withdraw from communion with slaveholders, nor divide the Church, or attempt to revolutionize the state on account of it ; and further, they left the solemn record of God's disapproval of those who would pursue a course in relation to this subject different from what they had done.

1. In closing this subject, I protest against any inference as illogical and false, which would go to show that either our Saviour or his Apostles approved of slavery in itself considered. They acted in relation to it in accordance with the great principle that Christ's kingdom is not of this world. They therefore carefully abstained from any direct interference with the civil institutions of society. But it does not hence follow, that they approved of all those institutions in their every detail and feature. Beside they knew that in gaining access to the human heart and in securing the conversion of the soul to God, they were doing more to alleviate all the sorrows of life, ten thousand times told than they could possibly have accomplished by any direct interference with the civil institutions of the day.

2. I may ask in view of our subject, if Christians of the present day, who feel it their duty in regard to the subject of slavery to follow the instruction, and imitate the example of our blessed Lord and his Apostles, can be so very far astray from the path of their duty as they are sometimes represented to be? We are confidently told, that a man cannot be a Christian unless he enters upon an immediate crusade against slavery. Unless he makes this the one great, grand, and all absorbing theme, of all his thoughts, words, and actions, he cannot be a Christian. But Jesus Christ teaches no such doctrine as this. The Apostles teach it not. Who is to be followed Jesus Christ and the Apostles, or these new lights that have arisen upon our moral horizon? Are they wiser than the Saviour? are they kinder hearted? Do they love the slave more than he did? Doubtful. Do they know more than all the inspired Apostles? Have they greater love for human beings than these same Apostles? But suppose a man should stand in awe of the rebuke, which God has administered against those, who take a course different from the Apostles on this subject,

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and should hesitate about becoming a modern abolitionist. Then he is a pro-slavery man, he is a pro-slavery minister. Well he has noble company. Moses and the Prophets, the Saviour and his Apostles come in for a share of the approbrium. These things are hard to be borne, when they come from good men, men whom we have reason to believe are christians, though misled. But when they come from men, who turn their backs daily upon Jesus Christ, and resist all his claims upon them, when such men turn a scornful and censorious eye upon the Church and say you cannot be christians unless you follow us instead of Christ and his Apostles; unless ye follow us instead of Christ and his Apostles ye are pro-slavery. O it is pitiful. And can they care anything about the slave? Men that care not for their own souls, nor for the honor of Christ, can they love the slave? Believe it who can? But we are told we must disconnect ourselves from christians in the South, and have no more communion with them because among these there are some slaveholders. But Christ did not do so. His Apostles pursued no such course as this. We may be ex-

cused then, if we continue to follow Christ and his Apostles, and still commune with the members of his body, whether in slaveholding or non-slaveholding communities. We dare not pursue a different course.

Besides there are many Christians who feel that they have no more right to interfere with southern institutions than with the institutions of Great Britain. The states of the south are just as much independent sovereignties as Great Britain; and if it were lawful for Christians to interfere at all with independent sovereignties to which they themselves are alien, they feel that their first duty should be directed to Great Britain, because there the greater evil exists. Were it lawful to interfere, they would lend their aid to the chartists and break down the unrighteous and overgrown monopolies of that kingdom which doom the great mass of its population to inevitable poverty and starvation. On what ground of equity are those great baronial estates founded? Were they not first acquired by brute force, and that force, too, slave labor? Are they not sustained by unmerciful and unequal legislation? It is not the poor and starving population

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who make the laws by which they are deprived forever from a fee simple in the soil, and by which they are a doomed race of men. But they are freemen, you say. Glorious freedom ! free to endure the burden of inevitable and eternal poverty—free to starve to death in multitudes, or live at a point so near starvation that life is but a living agony ! Why ? Because brute force in the first place, and unequal legislation in the second place, give one family more than they want, and one hundred families less than they need. Does time and custom change a wrong into a right ? Never. Then the few whose ancestors with their bands of servile retainers, waded through the blood of war to their estates, have no right in equity to all the soil to the exclusion of the many. Verily, the title to these baronies and dukedoms was acquired, and is sustained in a manner very similar to the title of property in human beings, and is productive of vastly more suffering and immorality. I say, then, if it were lawful for a Christian to interfere with the municipal regulations of foreign states, it would be our duty first to aim a death blow at the overgrown monopolies of Great Brit-

ain. and deliver the great mass of her population from poverty and starvation ; but as long as the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, it is not the duty of Christians to busy themselves in other men's matters : and we should think that a little modesty on the part of British Christians, and a little attention to the leprous spots upon their own mantle, would restrain them from turning their censorious regards so frequently across the mighty deep upon their brethren in this western world. If then we may not meddle with the affairs of Great Britain, we may not meddle with matters pertaining to the internal police of the independent sovereignties of our own land. Christians have other business to do than that of interfering with foreign politics. Their master never taught them any lesson on this subject. If therefore they engage in the hazardous enterprise, they run the risk of losing the favour of him whose kingdom is not of this world.

LECTURE V

**THE PHILOSOPHY, AND THE POLICY, AND
THE MERCY WITH WHICH OUR SAVIOUR
AND HIS APOSTLES TREATED THE SUB-
JECT OF SLAVERY.**

JOHN xvi. 12.

**“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye
cannot bear them now.”**

IN all the Bible there is no direct and specific enactment against slaveholding. That it is contrary to the gospel and to the principles of eternal equity, is matter of inference. But inferential truth is not seen simultaneously and equally by all men in all places, and under all circumstances. Such truth makes its way slowly among men, and requires time to assert its perfect and uncontrolled dominion over the human heart. On account of the peculiar circumstances in which we have been placed, a certain moral truth may be perfectly clear to us, while

others, who have been placed in circumstances altogether different, may have no distinct apprehension of it. They may be just as conscientious and devoutly honest in rejecting that truth as we have been in receiving it. Thus, it may be perfectly clear to us that the doctrine of witchcraft is altogether the creature of imagination, and that it is morally wrong to put persons to death on account of it; but our Puritan fathers believed in the existence of witches, and executed many of those whom they supposed to be such. Evidently, it is not owing to any superior acumen in us, nor any greater love to God or love to man, nor yet to any deeper spirit of piety in us, that we have views on this subject so different from theirs, but simply to the more favorable circumstances in regard to light in which we have been placed. It may be perfectly clear to us that it is morally wrong to hold a fellow man under bond-service, yet our Father Abraham, whose piety and faith, and acceptance with God we dare not call in question, held a large number of men in bondage. May it not be possible that many at the present day, on account of their peculiar circumstances, are

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quite as far behind us in point of moral illumination on this subject as our Father Abraham was ? They may not be convinced that it is morally wrong to hold men under bond-service : and shall we make our light a rule of action for them ? This would be presuming on our part to legislate over their consciences, and to make our individual views of duty the rule of their moral action—a species of usurpation unspeakably more enormous than that of holding men under civil bondage. First cast the beam out of thine own eye, says the great Law-giver, then shalt thou see clearly to cast the moat out of thy brother's eye.

That the human mind receives truth by a gradual process of advancement, is taught by our Saviour when he says to his disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." This is also in correspondence with all the laws of mind, and with all the developments of mediatorial rule. Yet our Saviour did not denounce his disciples, nor withdraw his love from them, because they had not the whole field of moral truth perfectly and distinctly within their vision. And throughout the

New Testament it is admitted that men may be amazingly deficient in their views of truth and yet be good men—yet be the children of God. Hence we hear the Apostle to the Corinthians using the following language : “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ ; I have fed you with milk and not with meat—for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.” Similar language he uses towards the Hebrew Christians. From all of which it is plain that neither our Saviour nor his Apostles made their own views of truth the rule of duty to their disciples, but communicated truth to them as they were able to bear it ; which truth, when communicated, was to them the law of moral action. These remarks may aid us in contemplating the philosophy, and the policy, and the mercy with which our Saviour and his Apostles treated the subject of slavery.

1. As to the philosophy of their procedure—whether was it true or false ? Such is the constitution of the human mind, that on all moral subjects it will not endure compulsion. Here all its action must be voluntary.

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The mind must be enlightened—must be convinced—must be brought under the influence of truth, before a man is prepared to act morally right. Moreover, the field of truth is so immense that none but the mind of God can adequately comprehend it in all the compass of it; and the moral vision of men is limited, yet capable of enlargement, though its expansion be unequal in different individuals in circumstances which are different. The light of truth develops itself gradually in all minds—in some more rapidly, in others less. Especially is this the case with inferential truth. There are some great preliminary truths which all intelligent minds seem prepared immediately to receive and appreciate. Other truths there are, which flow from these as a necessary consequence, that are not immediately seen and apprehended by all minds at the same time. A thousand things may be in operation upon some minds which constitutes their inability to receive the truth, while with others nothing may intervene to prevent its immediate reception. Any effort to coerce the mind in relation to truth, is not only vain but not unfrequently awakens up in the bosom

an unconquerable antipathy to it. Any effort to force a man to act morally right, when his mind is not fully enlightened and convinced, is always abortive; yea, an attempt to force him into right action when he is enlightened and convinced, is not only abortive, but usually drives him off from duty and prejudices him against its performance.

Jesus Christ, who understood perfectly the constitution of the human mind, would in no instance burden it with more than it was able to bear. The immediate disciples of our Lord, having embraced some of the great primary truths of Christianity, were as yet unable to bear other truths of vast importance to the perfection of their character; yet they were given to understand that in due time and as they were able to bear it, they should be fully enlightened and led into all truth. No disciple should ever entertain the imagination for a single moment, that he comprehends within the circle of his vision the whole field of divine truth. Having entered the school of Christ, he must be an humble learner as long as he continues in the flesh; and doubtless after death, if he is admitted into the paradise of God, he will still

be a learner upon a grander and nobler scale. And divine knowledge is communicated to all the disciples, by the great Head of the Church, as they are able to bear it. But no rule of duty can be made binding upon the conscience of any disciple which has its foundation in truth that as yet he has been unable to receive. This is an obvious principle, having its origin in the very nature of things. The disciple may fall under the righteous animadversion of his master for his slowness of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, but he can never be bound in conscience by any rule of duty that has its origin in truth with which he is yet unacquainted. Evidently it is the prerogative of the Master alone to censure his disciple, if censure is called for, for his foolishness and slowness of heart to believe. If one disciple take it upon himself to censure another, he is immediately met by the reproof of his Lord: "Who art thou that judgeth another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. First cast the beam out of thine own eye,"

The above considerations may explain the reasons why neither our Lord nor any of his

Apostles said a single word against slavery as an existing civil institution. Plainly, the disciples were as yet not able to bear it. Had they been able to bear it, the whole truth had been spread out before them in characters of living light. But they were not able. Hence they delivered no rule of duty which did not obviously result from the great primary truths which had been received. They directed masters to treat their slaves kindly, and slaves to be obedient to their masters.—The relation that existed between them as master and slave they did not touch. But because they did not disturb this relation for the time being is no evidence that they designed the relation should continue in its present form. Nothing could be more illogical than an inference of this kind. The evidence arising from the fact is, that men are slow in the reception of truth, and that God exercises forbearance towards his own people till they are able to bear the truth, and endures many things in them for a season from which he will eventually deliver them.

2. The policy of the course which our Saviour and his Apostles pursued with reference to the subject of slavery. True policy

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is always true philosophy, and true philosophy is the embodied spirit of true Christianity. In the days of Christ and his Apostles, slavery existed all over the world as a civil institution. Their business was to preach the gospel to every living creature—to make known to dying men their sinful, lost, and ruined condition by nature, and to proclaim to them salvation through a glorious Mediator. With their commission in their hand, under the broad seal of heaven, would it have been wise in them, would it have been good policy in them, to have paused in the work of preaching the gospel for the purpose of becoming political reformers; for the purpose of attacking the civil institutions of the day in every point wherein they presented a feature that needed reformation? In such a course of direct warfare against existing institutions would they not have armed the world against them, and cut themselves off from all access to the human mind? What would be the consequence were our missionaries in foreign lands to leave the embassy of God, turn political reformers and begin to meddle with the civil institutions of those countries in which they reside? They

would soon have to fly the country or become incarcerated in dungeons : and had the first ministers of the gospel so far forgotten their high character as ambassadors of Christ as to have descended into the arena of political strife, we had never heard of Christ nor of salvation through his name. Their career would have been short, their end would have been tragic and disgraceful. But they did not so learn Christ. They employed themselves exclusively in the fulfillment of their great commission. Well they knew that if they could gain a lodgment in the human heart for the great and primary truths of Christianity, all related truths would in due time be fully embraced as the minds of men became able to receive and bear them. Well they knew if once the hearts of men became right with God, in due time their intercourse with each other would be regulated in accordance with the principles of justice and mercy : and well they knew if the heart was not right with God, that any legislation in regard to human intercourse would be vain and nugatory. They therefore gave their undivided attention to the preaching of the gospel ; to the work of

bringing men in a state of reconciliation with God, and to the presentation of precepts in regard to personal holiness. These, with our Saviour and his Apostles, were the great and paramount questions, compared with which all others were of minor importance. "Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it." To be delivered from the bondage of sin is infinitely more important than deliverance from civil bondage. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman. "Brethren, let every man wherein he is called therein abide with God." Your civil condition, whether bond or free, is a matter about which you need not be over solicitous, provided your heart is reconciled to God, provided ye are the Lord's freeman.

The course pursued by our Saviour and his Apostles was manifestly the only true policy. Had they made an attack upon the political institutions of the day, they would have roused the prejudices of the world against them and barred themselves from all access to the public mind. We may form some correct judgment of what the state of things would have been, in case of

such an attack, by calling to our recollection the jealousy that exist at the present day against the interference of ministers of the gospel with political questions. Suppose any minister of the present day should make the preaching of the gospel a subject of secondary importance and give his undivided attention to the eradication of some great political evil, would he gain the ear and find access to the hearts of the great body of the community? A clique of partizans might listen with delight to his secular harangues, but the great mass of mind and heart would be driven irrecoverably beyond his reach. The Apostles did not for a moment so far forget their high character as ambassadors of Christ, as once to think of pursuing such a course. They passed the institution of slavery in silence, so far as regards its abolition. They did not meddle with this question.—By avoiding this and other political questions, they gained the ear of the world for the messages of salvation, and poured into the mass of mind and heart the leaven of divine truth. By pursuing this course they did ten thousand times more towards the abolition of slavery, and all other political evils,

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than could possibly have been effected had they set themselves up as political reformers. By simply testifying repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, they introduced into the relations of man a mighty element, the tendency of which is to deliver him from all oppression and restore to him all his rights, and which became most powerfully efficient in after times for the abolition even of slavery itself. Without this element of Christian love, nothing can be done towards removing the wrongs which have crept into the relations of life through the prevalence of sin. The course pursued by the Saviour and his Apostles was the only wise, safe and feasible course that could be pursued under the circumstances; and where circumstances are similar, a similar course ought to be pursued by all who bear the name of Christ.

3. The mercy of the course pursued by the Saviour and his Apostles in relation to the subject of slavery. The course which they pursued was merciful toward the master and the servant.

1. It was merciful towards the master. It did not judge him by a rule originating in

truth which as yet he was unable to bear. And what disciple of our Lord is there, or has there ever been, who is or was able to bear at once, all the truth that pertains to his relation both to God and man, and at once to enter upon the performance of all the duties which a knowledge and embracement of the whole truth imperiously call for? Not one. The whole economy of grace, as portrayed in the scriptures, and the uniform experience of all the children of God, are in proof of this. The work of renovating grace in the human heart, is represented as small in its beginning and gradual in its development. Hence we read of babes in Christ who were fed with milk; hence we are exhorted to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Such language could have no meaning, or application if every disciple did at once embrace the whole truth and discharge all the duties, which arise out of his relations to God and man. Were such the fact, there could be no such thing as moral infancy, no such thing as growth in grace. Even the best of men, and the most favoured, Christians if they have correct views of themselves, feel

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that they have much to learn before they arrive at a state of moral and spiritual maturity. Taking into view christian experience and the word of God in reference to this subject, it must be a conceded point, that there are amazing deficiencies in all, both in regard to a comprehensive knowledge and cordial reception of truth. If our blessed master should treat all his disciples as it is proposed to treat slaveholding professors of religion, withdraw communion from them, denounce them, cast them out of favor, because they do not come up to his standard of truth, he would make a clean sweep of the whole sacramental host. The whole field of moral truth lies, in living characters of light, most perfectly within the compass of his mental vision. Should he deal with us according to the light of truth which lies concentrated within the compass of his vision, and not according to the truth which we have been able to receive and bear, a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation would soon appall the heart and blight the hope of every living disciple.— But our Saviour is merciful. Hence, both he and his Apostles treated the slaveholder

according to the truth which he was able to bear. He treated him then just as he treats him now, and he treats him now just as he treats all his other disciples. He sees in all much that he cannot approve, much that grieves his holy heart; but he bears with them because he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, but amidst all their imperfections he will watch over, cultivate and mature that good work which he has begun in their hearts. Thus the kind Saviour deals mercifully with all his people. He has no more occasion to exercise mercy towards the slaveholder, than towards those who do not sustain that relation, unless the slaveholder sin wilfully against his own convictions of duty. But who has a right to make his own convictions of duty the rule for another man's moral action? Such would be an arrogant assumption of God's prerogatives. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." Jesus and his Apostles treated the masters of slaves with mercy; that is, according to the amount of truth which they were able to bear. Would be to the disciple who desires to be treated

after a different manner. "Judge not that ye be not judged."

2. The course pursued by them was merciful to the slave. It brought to his bosom the consolations of Christianity. It delivered him from the thralldom of sin, and introduced him into the glorious liberty of the children of God. "He that is called in the Lord," says the Apostle, "being a servant, is the Lord's freeman." "If the Son shall make you free," says Jesus Christ, "ye shall be free indeed." Thus, an unspeakable benefit was conferred upon the poor slave. He was delivered, by the grace of Christ, from the most oppressive kind of bondage—the bondage of sin! Again, the course pursued by them gave them ready access to the mind and heart of the master. They secured a lodgment in his bosom for the glorious element of Christian love. This laid the foundation for the eventual emancipation of the slave from civil bondage. What other course could they have pursued which would have secured so many rich blessings to the slave? None, certainly. The element of christian love is the only thing that can ever reach the evils of slavery. And this element must be in

the bosom of the slaveholder before the evil can be reached or removed. In the Roman empire many efforts had been made to abolish slavery by coercion, but they had all signally failed, and the condition of the slave had only become more wretched in consequence. Suppose the Apostles had commenced their course by denouncing slaveholders ; by calling them thieves, and robbers, and murderers ; by publicly proclaiming them so unclean and polluted, that even their money could not be received to promote any benevolent object : what must have been the result ? These masters, long accustomed to sustain this relation with the unbroken concurrence of the whole world, were not sufficiently enlightened to see or feel that it was sinful to hold their fellow men in bondage ; yet it required but little light to see that such a course of denunciation was outrageously arrogant and insulting. What class of men in the world, under such an assault upon their characters, would not combine for resistance ? Would the Apostles in this case ever have preached the gospel to slaveholders ? Would they have preached it to slaves ? No, never.—

They would have found masters barred against all access to them, and servants effectually guarded against any possibility of approaching them. Would such a course have been merciful to the slave? Certainly not. In this case, neither master nor servant would ever have heard the gospel or come under its blissful influences, and slavery would have continued its unbroken reign to the end of time. But as soon as a master was converted by the preaching of the gospel, the condition of his servant was immediately improved. As soon as truth had gained admittance into the heart of the master, then, on the ground of that truth, the Apostle might interpose in behalf of his servants and secure to them kind treatment.—The course pursued by them in preaching the gospel was merciful to the slave. It secured to him an immediate amelioration of his condition, laid the foundation of his future emancipation from civil bondage, and above all, inspired his bosom with hope of heaven.

1. In conclusion, let me remark, first, that there is a great difference in men in regard to the distinct perception and the candid re-

ception of truth. This difference originates not in the fact that one man is better by nature than another, but in the fact that they are placed in different circumstances. How long was it before the early Jewish converts were able to understand and heartily embrace the truth with respect to the Gentiles becoming fellow heirs with them to the same promise? For a long time they were not able to bear this truth. A national prejudice, of long standing, constituted their inability. It took time to eradicate this prejudice and fully enlighten them on this subject. Yet the blessed Saviour did not cast them out of his favor because they were slow of heart to believe and embrace this truth, so essential to the enlargement of his kingdom. From the very different circumstances in which we are placed, we understand and embrace this truth instantly. It is not because we are better and more conscientious christians than they, but simply because we are placed in circumstances more favorable for the reception of this truth.—Christ treats all his disciples according to the truth which they are able to bear. He never makes his own standard of truth a rule

of duty for them. Now, it is very possible that those who have been born and brought up in slaveholding communities, may not be able to understand and embrace so much truth in regard to this subject, as we who are in circumstances so very different. Are they to be judged according to the light which we have received, or according to the light which they have received? Christ will judge them according to the light which they have received.

2. I would respectfully ask, whether we at the north do well in denouncing the south, and in threatening to withhold communion from southern christians. Have we forgotten that all men come to the knowledge of the truth by a very gradual process, and that the farthest advanced have yet much to learn? We ought certainly to remember that we have but just got our eyes opened upon this and kindred subjects. It is not long since we at the north were hanging and drowning poor simple people for witchcraft. It is not long since we were a slaveholding community. In the state of New York the abolition of slavery is within memory of many now living. Is it seemly in us, so

soon after we have in part rectified our own errors, to rush upon the south with all the fury of the tempest? Shall we denounce them, and cut them off from the household of faith, because they are now where we were a few days since? Truly, this is a marvelous course for christians to pursue. Will Jesus Christ approve it? Will he allow us to make our convictions of duty a rule of action for other men, when he does not himself judge any by his own standard of truth, but according to the truth which they have been able to receive and bear?



LECTURE VI.

DO THE SCRIPTURES, RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD, AUTHORIZE THE INSTITUTION OF BOND-SERVICE?

MATT. xxii. 37—40.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

If there is any warrant in scripture for the institution of slavery, it must be found in the above condensed summary of the divine law. But who in sober reason, and under the influence of christian love, can find any such warrant there? This law enjoins first, all the duties which we, as creatures, owe to our glorious Creator. It thus gives glory to God in the highest, to whom of right all glory belongs. It enjoins, secondly, all the

duties which man owes to his fellow man. Thus it produces "peace on earth and good will to man." Love is the great element which the moral law would employ to secure these blessed results. No other principle in the human bosom, could be reached which would respond so certainly and so delightfully to the eternal equities of divine requirement. The moral law must not be regarded as an arbitrary enactment of sovereignty, but as having its foundation and reason in the nature of those relations which we sustain to God and to each other. It is therefore the very law of our nature; and the only law to be found in the annals of the universe which secures to God his highest glory, and to man his greatest happiness.

It is the second part of this law, relating to the duties which man owes to his fellow man, that properly comes into view in this discussion. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Now, if there is any warrant in the Bible for holding men under bond-service, it must be found in this single precept; for, says the Saviour, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." As these two commandments

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are a summary expression of all that is taught in the law and the prophets, so they are a condensed exhibition of all that is taught in the gospel. Jesus Christ re-enacts them, and incorporates them into the gospel system, as constituting its chief essence and glory. All that God has taught us in regard to the relations which we sustain to each other, and in regard to the duties arising out of those relations which we owe to each other, is to be found in the single precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Volumes are condensed in this one precept: yet the principle of love will unfold, and expand, and apply it with unerring precision to all the varied exigencies of man. So thought an inspired Apostle. "Love," says he, "worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." (*Rom. xiii. 10.*) Who, then, with christian love in his heart, and this law distinctly before his mind, could ever think of finding in it a warrant for slavery? Unloosen all the seals of its many volumes, unroll and read, and you will not find in it the warrant which you seek. Yet, if the warrant be not found here, there is no divine warrant to be found for

the institution of bond service. All that God has taught in the law and the prophets and the gospel, on the subject of our relations and duties to each other, is embodied in this one precept. We conclude, hence, that the divine law does not authorize the institution of slavery. Where, then, is a warrant for this institution to be found? Nowhere, certainly, except in human laws. And the laws and usages of men which furnish such a warrant, are most unquestionably alien to the spirit of the divine law. The mere fact, that God has at different times tolerated the existence of slavery, is not evidence, surely, that he either authorizes or approves it.

1. Let us now briefly glance over the subject as it appears in the Bible, and see if the existence of slavery be not, in all instances, traceable to human enactment.

2. Examine some of those passages of scripture which are relied upon as giving a divine sanction to the institution of slavery.

1. We are briefly to glance at the subject as it appears in the Bible, and see if the existence of slavery be not, in all instances, traceable to human enactment.

Slavery, properly so-called, doubtless had

its origin in war. Captives taken in battle were preserved from death, upon the hard condition of losing their liberty. As the custom of saving war-prisoners increased and slaves were multiplied, certain usages in regard to them would spring up and acquire the force and character of law. Uniform and immemorial usage constitutes common law. Slavery once introduced in the way above noted, and the community becoming accustomed to its existence, and withal, seeing it to be profitable to the slave owner, various other opportunities than that of warfare would be embraced to bring men into a state of bond-service. Whoever, in any manner, was reduced to a state of slavery, would be treated according to the common law, which had originated in the long standing usages of men in regard to the subject.

So early as the days of Abraham, slavery had assumed a maturity of form and consistancy of character, and constituted a distinct element in the social condition of men. At this age, too, the slave trade was in active operation; for Abraham had servants which were bought with his money, as well as those that were born in his house. We

have reason to believe that this trade continued in after time with unabated force, as it always will continue, where the laws of nations authorize the institution of slavery. In the days of Jacob we find the Ishmaelish merchants purchasing Joseph without the least hesitancy. This they would not have done, unless the slave trade had been an allowed practice in their time, and unless they had been certain of finding a ready market for him in some slave mart. Shortly after this we find the whole nation of Israel in a state of bond-service to the Egyptians. Thus, long before Moses, slavery existed among the nations as a part of their social economy, with its usages and well defined and established laws. But who will pretend that the nations of the earth had a divine sanction for the institution? Where, in the book of revelation or in the book of nature, can that sanction be found? The mere fact that it existed, is no more evidence that God sanctioned it, than that he sanctioned idolatry which existed at the same time.

When Moses, therefore appeared as a divine law-giver, he found the institution of slavery as well among the Jews as among

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other nations, in all its maturity and strength. (*Exod.* xxi. 2—6.) God saw that it was not safe nor best, for the present, to attempt its abolition: he therefore suffered it to remain. He did not, however, suffer it to remain precisely in the form in which it had previously existed. The condition of the Hebrew slave was materially improved; and slaves of other nations were placed under the protection of law. But the mere toleration of a thing is no evidence of its approval. Nor is the regulation of a thing, which may be suffered to exist, by municipal enactments, any evidence that it exists by divine warrant. The law of divorce, which was in existence among the Jews at this time, was suffered to remain under a specific regulation. (*Deut.* xxiv. 1; *Mark* x. 4—9.) But neither the toleration nor the regulation of this consuetudinary law furnishes any evidence of divine approval or of divine warrant. Polygamy and concubinage were tolerated under the old dispensation, but who is prepared to say that they were ever practiced under a divine warrant. (*I Sam.* i. 1, 2. *Exod.* xxi. 9, 10.) That slavery, and divorce, and polygamy were evils, which were barely

tolerated for the time being, for reasons good and sufficient then existing, is manifest from the fact that no warrant for either of them can be found in the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Slavery existed at the opening of the Christian dispensation; and for good reasons, then existing, it was still tolerated, until the world should be sufficiently enlightened and imbued with the spirit of Christianity to see and feel that it was contrary to the spirit of the divine law. In the meantime, while the institution was suffered to remain, wise and salutary counsel was given both to master and servant, in regard to the duties which they owed to each other respectively. As soon as the spirit of Christianity should be sufficiently matured in the hearts of the community, then there would be needed no new enactment to abolish slavery. Masters, actuated by the spirit of the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," would voluntarily manumit their slaves.

In looking over the lapse of time now brought under review, to me it appears very clear that no divine warrant can be found for the institution of slavery. It is plainly a

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human institution, and manifestly contrary to the spirit of the divine law, rightly understood. This human institution was tolerated by the municipal laws of Moses, and suffered to continue, for the time being, at the beginning of the Christian dispensation. But the manner in which it was treated, in either instance did not confer upon it a divine warrant.

2. We proceed now, in the second place, to examine some of those passages of scripture which are relied upon as giving a divine sanction to the institution of slavery.

I may be permitted here to say, that if the sanction cannot be found in the two great commandment of the law, the strong presumption is that it cannot be found in the Bible. With respect to the relations which man holds to his fellow man, the one precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," comprehends all that the law and the prophets and the gospel teach. If you cannot find the sanction for slavery in this precept of the law, in vain do you look for it in the book of God.

One text which is frequently quoted as furnishing a sanction for enslaving the African race is the following. (*Gen. ix. 24, 25.*)

“And Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his younger son had done unto him ; and he said cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.”— Does this passage authorize any nation to enslave the African race ?

1. In answer to this question, I remark, first, that the passage is evidently prophetic. It refers to the future condition of his posterity, upon whom the prophetic imprecation was pronounced. But does the prophetic announcement of evil against any people authorize others to rise up and inflict that evil upon them ? If so, then Pharoah was justifiable in reducing the Israelites to the grievous bondage under which they groaned in Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar was justifiable in all the hardships which he inflicted upon them in Babylon. And neither Pharoah nor Nebuchadnezzar ought to have been punished for the course which they pursued towards the Jews ; for, in both instances, their servile and suffering condition was matter of prophecy. Evidently no man is justifiable, in the infliction of evil upon any people on the simple ground that they are the subjects of a prophetic imprecation, unless that man

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have a specific divine warrant appointing him to the work as God's executioner. Neither Pharaoh nor Nebuchadnezzar had any such warrant; therefore God punished them most fearfully for the parts which they severally acted in relation to the oppression of the Jews. If, therefore, the prophecy has relation to the present African race, those nations who enslave them must show a specific divine warrant by which they are appointed God's agents to fulfill the prediction, or their conduct herein is not capable of justification.

2. I remark secondly, that this Noetic prophecy is restricted to Canaan, the youngest son of Ham. It has no application to Ham, nor Cush, nor Mitzraim, nor Phut, but is exclusively applied to Canaan. (*See Faber's Pagan Idolatry, Vol. 1, p. 89.*)—There is not the least evidence that the posterity of Canaan ever settled in Africa.—Their dwelling place was western Asia. "And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha." (*Gen. x. 19.*) There is no evidence, I say, that the modern Africans are the descend-

ants of Canaan. But those who rely on this part of scripture as furnishing a sanction for the institution of slavery, as it affects the African race, must not only show a divine warrant by which they are specifically appointed as God's agents to fulfill the prophecy, but, in a matter of so much importance, they must know with perfect certainty that the prophecy is strictly applicable to those whom they hold in a state of bondage. How can they know this, since there is not a particle of evidence that any of Canaan's posterity ever settled in Africa. (*Gen. x. 15—19.*) It is perfectly idle, commentators to the contrary notwithstanding, to assert that the prophecy relates to any or all the other sons of Ham, because the Bible limits it exclusively to Canaan. If, therefore, they cannot show their divine warrant by which they are appointed as God's agents in the premises, nor demonstrate that the present race of Africans are descendants of Canaan, they utterly fail of finding a sanction for slavery in the Noetic prophecy.

The permission which Moses gave to the Jews, (*Levit. xxv. 44—46.*) to purchase and possess themselves of slaves from the Hea-

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then around them, and from the strangers that dwelt among them, is sometimes referred to as furnishing a sanction for the institution of slavery at the present day ; but certainly, I think, without any reason or even probability.

1. This is evidently the mere recognition of an old consuetudinary law, which, being interwoven with the very frame-work of all the domestic arrangements of the nation, could not with safety to the people be abrogated under existing circumstances. It is not to be regarded as a new law, enacted by Moses, but simply as the recognition of an old law, for the purpose of adding to it certain modifications. Thus modified, for wise reasons it was suffered to continue for the present. The previous publication of the moral law, which looks to the ultimate abolition of slavery, is conclusive evidence that this old law was barely suffered on account of the blindness of their minds and the hardness of their hearts. The circumstances, therefore, under which this institution was tolerated, were such as to show that God did not approve of the thing in itself considered. But an institution that is barely suffered for

the time being, on account of peculiar circumstances, has no warrant for its continuance, even among the same people, when the circumstances are no longer the same.

2. Much less, I remark secondly, does the simple allowance of this institution among the Jews, authorize any other nation under heaven either to establish or continue it among them. A privilege granted to A, specifically, cannot, by any process of just reasoning, be so construed as belonging to B. The same rule holds good in regard to communities as it does in regard to individuals. The allowance of slavery among the Jews furnished no warrant at the time to any other nation to hold men in a state of bond-service.

3. Much less, I remark thirdly, does the allowance of slavery among the Jews in the days of Moses, and even during the whole period of their peculiar polity, furnish any warrant to a nation in a remote age of the world, to establish and continue the institution among themselves; especially when they live under a widely different dispensation, which, when compared with that of the Jews, in point of moral illumination, is as noonday brightness when contrasted with

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the twilight of the morning. The new dispensation under which men now live, abrogates every thing in the old which is not moral in its nature. But that feature of the old dispensation which allowed the existence of slavery, was no part of the moral law. It was a human institution, which was barely tolerated for the time being. Hence, even the Jews, under the new dispensation, can have no warrant for the institution of slavery, arising out of Mosaic allowance ; much less can a Christian nation have such a warrant.

Moreover, if the mere fact that the Jews, for certain considerations then existing, were suffered to hold men under bond-service, makes slavery at the present day justifiable, then, for a similar reason, polygamy, and divorce for any cause, are now justifiable.— But who would think of pleading for the lawfulness of polygamy and divorce for any cause now, simply because these things were tolerated under the old dispensation ? If the toleration of them then, does not make them lawful now, neither does the toleration of slavery then, make it lawful now. What ever view we take of bond-service among the ancient Jews, we cannot see that it fur-

nishes the least warrant for the existence of slavery at the present day.

Other portions of scripture which are relied on by some as furnishing a sanction for the institution of modern slavery, are the Apostolic directions, frequently repeated in the New Testament, for servants to be obedient to their masters according to the flesh. They had a Master in heaven, to whom love and service were due as the very term of their discipleship. They had, also, masters according to the flesh, to whom, by existing laws, service was due. This service the Apostles faithfully enjoined upon all who were in bondage, for reasons assigned, viz : First, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed by the violation of civil law. (1 *Tim.* vi. 1.) And secondly, that by a cheerful and ready obedience, they might adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. (*Tit.* ii. 9, 10.) A great evil was to be avoided, and a great good to be secured, in the course recommended by the Apostles to those servants who were under the yoke.

Now, I look upon those directions of the Apostles, which required slaves to be obedi-

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ent to their masters, as furnishing no approval or sanction of the laws which made slaves of them. It is as though they had said to servants under the yoke—your condition, it is true, is undesirable; it is even loaded with many hardships; yet as christians, it is your duty to submit quietly to the powers that be; to obey the laws established, that in all things you may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. The duty of the slave is one thing; the character of the law which makes him a slave, is quite another thing.—Because God commands his people, under given circumstances, to submit patiently to an evil, does it hence follow that he approves or sanctions that evil? If this be so, then almost all the sins in the catalogue may find a divine warrant. The infinite Saviour informs his disciples that they should be betrayed, and murdered, and hated of all men; yet amidst these evils, he says, “in your patience possess ye your souls”; that is, under all these trials act like christians, not rendering evil for evil. Does it confer a divine sanction upon treachery, and murder, and hatred, because the disciples were commanded to conduct themselves with christian patience.

under such trials ? Who will affirm it ?— But he has just as good a right to affirm this as he has to affirm that the commanded obedience of slaves to their masters, confers a divine sanction upon the institution of slavery. The mere fact, then, that christian slaves were commanded to be obedient to their masters, furnished no divine warrant for the institution of slavery under which they then lived, much less does it warrant its existence at this advanced stage of christian light.— While it is still the duty of servants who are under the yoke to obey their masters according to the flesh that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed, yet there is now less apology for the continuance of slavery than in the days of the Apostles. Then was but the dawn of christian light upon this dark world. The moral vision of even the redeemed, was then weak and not able to bear all the light of truth that was ready to pour in upon them from the eternal fountain of divine love. But now, after this light has beamed over the darkness of earth for eighteen centuries, we should look for some improvement in the moral vision, some more enlarged and distinct perception of the relations

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which we sustain to each other, a better practiced understanding of that great principle of the law "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." But alas, notwithstanding all the kind indulgence of heaven, and all the culture divinely bestowed, the world appears to be yet in a state of moral infancy and very much in the condition of those to whom the Apostle addresses the following language: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God." (*Heb. v. 12.*) What do we see? One, who judges himself authorized by scripture to be a slave owner. Another, who thinks himself authorized by scripture to judge that one, to denounce him, to anathematize him, because he is a slave owner.—Alas! That the sweet charity of heaven should be so forgotten.

1. In conclusion permit me first to call your attention to what from this discussion appears to be the fact in reference to this subject: that is that the only warrant for slavery, is the enactment of human laws. A warrant for it certainly cannot be found in the moral law. Nor can it be found in any

of those scriptures that are sometimes relied on as furnishing a sanction for the institution. No man is authorized by the Noetic prophecy to hold another under bond-service unless he is perfectly certain that, that other is a descendant of Canaan, and that he himself has an express commission from God to enslave him. No man is authorized from the allowance of slavery under the old dispensation, to hold his fellow men under bond service unless he is himself a Jew, and actually living under that dispensation, long since abrogated by the oblation of Christ. And because christian slaves under the new dispensation were commanded to exemplify their christian spirit by calmly and quietly submitting to their condition, though an undesirable one, certainly furnishes no warrant from God for the institution of slavery. If a warrant for this institution is not found in the moral law, nor yet in any of those scriptures usually quoted for that purpose, where is it to be found ? The answer is, you must go to man for your warrant, if any you have. But will the authority of human laws justify the practice in the court of enlightened conscience, and at the bar of omnipotent justice ?

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2. I remark secondly that God often endures things, which he cannot and does not approve. Thus slavery among the ancient Jews and early christians was suffered but not approved. The evidence that it was not approved in either instance, is the public and authoritative announcement of that great principle of law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," which covers all the relations and obligations of man to man. This law rightly understood and practically obeyed, signs the death warrant of slavery in all the multiplied shades of its manifestation. It is an element of eternal antagonism to all the wrongs with which sin has overflowed the race of men. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." The publication of this law vindicates God from all suspicion of ever bestowing his approval or sanction upon the institution of slavery. As God suffered slavery among the Jews, and early christians, but did not approve it, so he may suffer it at the present day, but he does not, and cannot approve it.

3. I remark thirdly that the best course for those to pursue, who think that they have authority from the word of God to hold their

fellow men under bond-service, is to give themselves candidly and prayerfully to the study of the moral law, especially that precept of it, which covers the relations that men sustain to each other under the government of God. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is a rule eternally obligatory upon all men. Upon a broad principle of equity which all are capable of appreciating and understanding, it constitutes each one the judge of what is due to his fellow men.

Does self love revolt at the idea of your becoming a bond-servant? Then should you revolt at the idea of holding a fellow man under bond-service. Let the moral law be studied until its import is fully understood, its beauty and glory seen, its value appreciated, and its benign influence deeply felt by every bosom and slavery would only be known, as what had once been, but now is not. All would then be free from the slavery of sin and Satan, all would be liberated from every species of civil bondage; there would be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, and nothing would offend in all God's holy mountain.

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IF THE SCRIPTURES RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD DO NOT AUTHORIZE THE INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY, HOW ARE WE TO TREAT CHRISTIANS WHO STAND CONNECTED WITH THE INSTITUTION?

ROM. xiv. 1.

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.”

“Lord wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did”? said two of the disciples on a particular occasion, when certain Samaritans had declined to extend the rights of hospitality to them, and their Master. “But he turned, and rebuked them, and said ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” (*Luke 9. 54-6.*) Those disciples, though themselves as yet in the dark on many important doctrin-

al points relating to the kingdom of Christ, were notwithstanding penetrated with a deep sense of the moral worth of their divine master, and felt indignant that a village of the Samaritans should refuse him the rights of hospitality. By manifesting a proper resentment and taking summary measures to chastize them for the supposed insult, they concluded, they would be but commending their own zeal in the cause of religion, and showing their attachment to the person of the Saviour. But the temper of mind, which they indulged was neither in accordance with the spirit of the gospel, nor honorable to that Master, whom by it, they designed to serve. These disciples are not the only persons, who under the impression of a deep, and burning zeal for truth, have cherished in their bosoms the unrelenting spirit of fanaticism. Under the plea of more than ordinary attachment to truth, and purity, and righteousness, how many alienate from their souls the last spark of heaven's charity, and substitute in its place an uncompromising malignity, that would wither and blight every thing in the empire of God, which does not symbolize with their peculiar views. "Wilt thou that we com-

mand fire to come down from heaven and consume them? Well is it for poor, suffering humanity, that the fire of heaven is not under the control of this spirit.

There was some tendency to the indulgence of this spirit in the primitive church of Rome. The Jewish and Gentile converts differed in opinion on sundry subjects pertaining to the ritual of religion. These differences of opinion produced heated and angry disputations among them. These disputes engendered antipathy one toward another and mutual recriminations. It was time for the Apostle to interpose the authority, which God had given him for the edification, and peace of the church. He begins by laying down a general principle which covers, and is applicable to all cases of a similar character, where there are points of difference between members of the christian family. ‘Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.’ We are not only to receive him that is weak in the faith, but we are to refrain from annoying him with our peculiar views in a way of angry controversy. We may state our own views in a kind and christian manner and firmly adhere to them, but

we may not denounce those in the church, who differ from us as unworthy a place in the family of God.

This rule of the Apostle is I think, evidently applicable to us in our intercourse with southern christians. The matter in difference between us and them, it is true, is not the same, as that between the Jew and Gentile in the church of Rome. It is unspeakably less momentous in its character. That was an incipient struggle between Judaism and christianity, vital to the soul's salvation. This relates simply to the civil condition of men. Now it is notorious, that men may be christians, and eminent christians, and still remain under civil bondage, but no man can be a christian and still remain a Jew at heart. (*Gal.* iii. 2—6.) If it was the duty of the Gentile christian to receive the Jewish convert, who still had a predilection for some parts of an abrogated ceremonial law, much more is it our duty to receive into peaceable communion those members of the christian family who as yet do not see, nor feel that the relation, which they sustain to their servants, is one that is not warranted by the scriptures. That the above position is entirely correct I

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most conscientiously and firmly believe, and for the following reasons.

1. The manner, in which God treated this subject in the days of Moses and during the whole period of the Jewish polity, may teach us the duty of forbearance towards christians who are entangled in the meshes of a civil institution. which prevents their immediate reception of truth in all the extent of its application. Slavery existed among the Jews, when God promulgated his holy law from mount Sinai. That law rightly understood, and practically obeyed, is death to the institution of bond service. But the people were not able to bear all the light and glory of the moral law in its application to human relations, and God in his wisdom, and condescension, and mercy exercised indulgence toward their weakness. He permitted the institution of bond-service, identified as it was by the immemorial usage with all the domestic arrangements of the people, to remain for the time being; only making such modifications in it, as they were able to bear, to ameliorate somewhat the condition of the slave. Now if God, who understands his own law most perfectly, did exercise forbearance towards

his people in this instance and commune with them, still, much more should we exercise forbearance towards our fellow christians, who are in circumstances in many respects entirely analogous to those of the Jews. In this instance God dealt with his people not according to his own glorious standard of truth, forever dear to his heart, and eternally present to his infinite mind, but according to the amount of truth, which, they were able to bear. And do we not all need the same tender forbearance on account of our many deficiencies both in knowledge and righteousness? Does it become us, because we may have received a little more light than others, not on account of our being better men than they, but on account of our being placed in more favorable circumstances for the reception of light does it become us, to rise up and judge them make our standard of truth a rule of moral action to them, and if they do not instantly comply with our dictation, drive them from the house of God, and treat them as aliens? If God in the light of his own blessed truth, should treat us, as many are disposed indiscriminately to treat all, who sustain the relation of Master to servant, yea

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all, who do not exactly symbolize with them in sentiment, our prospects for the future would soon be covered with the pall of eternal night. But blessed be God, "He is plenteous in mercy." "He hath not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." That same mercy which he shows to us, he shows even to slaveholders. He did so in the days of Moses, he did so in the days of Christ, and what should prevent him from doing so now under circumstances very similar in their character? Evidently, if we have his spirit, that same mercy which we crave of him, we shall be willing to show to others.

2. The example of our blessed Lord is not to be overlooked on this subject. He has left us an example, that we should follow his steps. (1 *Pet.* ii. 21.) It is undeniable that he lived in daily contact with the institution of slavery, of slavery, if you please, in its mildest form. Yet the pictures which he draws of the institution then existing, for the purpose of illustrating important truth, show us that it was slavery sufficiently rigorous in its character. Those servants, that pass in review before us, are slaves in the broadest

sense of the term. They go at the bidding of their master, they employ themselves for his benefit, without any reward except the general approbation of their faithfulness and their advancement to more responsible stations of trust, and when they fail in obedience they are punished without appeal to any other law than the will of their masters. (*Luke* xii. 46: *Math.* xxv. 30.) Where in all the instruction of our Saviour, is there a word said against the institution of slavery? Though he referred to slavery often for the illustration of truth, and though he remained silent as it regards any direct interference with it, yet I cannot infer hence that he approved of the institution itself. On the contrary, the fact that he re-enacted the great principle of the moral law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and incorporated it into the christian system, is to me convincing proof that he did not, and could not, approve of slavery. But in his infinite wisdom, he saw that the best way to remove it was not to interfere with it directly. He therefore passed it by in silence, as a minor evil, and employed himself in the more important business of bringing both master and

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servant into a state of reconciliation with God. Where is the evidence, that Jesus Christ refused to commune with the slaveholders of his day? Where is the evidence that he withheld his approbation from any who were penitent and believing, on account of their peculiar civil relations? Did he not commend the faith of the Roman centurion, who was doubtless a slaveholder? (*Luke* vii. 29.) Jesus Christ did not judge and treat his disciples according to the fulness of truth, which lay concentrated in his own infinite mind, but according to the amount of truth, which they were able to receive and bear. If they were reconciled to God, if they had a little faith, a little love, a little humility, he approved the good which they had, and bore with their infirmities. He communed with them, and encouraged them to persevere in the path of holiness. We are bound to imitate our Divine Master in this, as in all his other examples, which are imitable. And if we imitate him, we shall do no such thing as denounce a man because he happens to be a slaveholder, and we not, we shall do no such thing as withhold communion from him, or threaten to withhold.

If we have not the spirit of Christ we are none of his.

3. The same great principle, of treating men according to the truth which they could bear, was observed by the apostles of our Lord, as they went abroad under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, preaching the gospel to every creature. When in fulfillment of their great commission, they passed the limits of Judea into the adjacent provinces of the Roman empire, they found themselves surrounded continually with slaves and slave owners. To these, they preached indiscriminately, whenever and wherever they were accessible, and testified to all repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. The early converts to christianity were slaves and slave owners. Together they were constituted into churches, together they communed in the same church, and with them all the apostles had fellowship and communion. (1 *Cor.* xii. 13.) Being directed by the holy Spirit, they did not interfere with the existing civil relations of their converts, but enjoined upon them a faithful discharge of the reciprocal duties which arise out of those relations. The slave was to be obedient, the master

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was to be kind, as they should both answer for their conduct in the day of final reckoning. Now we can find nothing in the conduct of these great master builders of Zion, which will justify us in withholding communion from our brethren in the south, because they may be slaveholders. Most clearly, by their example, as well as by the manner in which God and the Saviour had previously treated the subject, the Holy Spirit teaches us that it is our duty to receive these converts to christianity into peaceable communion and treat them as brethren, "because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit."

In pursuing the above course, it is not necessary to compromise one iota of the great principles of the moral law. Indeed, under the circumstances, it is the only way in which we can illustrate the spirit of that law by our example. The apostles, when they received slaveholders into the church and communed with them, made no compromise of that fundamental principle of the christian system, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." On the contrary, under the direction of the blessed Spirit, they pursued the only feasi-

ble course to gain for it a more universal suffrage. They secured a lodgment for it in the heart of the slave owner, and by a consistent illustration of it in their own example, they did not alarm his prejudice nor overtask his weakness, but left it in his bosom unembarrassed, to leaven his whole spirit, and yield the precious fruits of christian charity. What element under the moral government of God except christianity, can reach the slave, dissolve his bonds, and elevate his moral and intellectual nature in the scale of humanity. None, certainly. Christianity, has done all that ever has been done, towards improving the condition of bond servants. Were not the apostles wise in the course which they pursued? And would we not be wise to imitate their example?

What good will result from pursuing a different course? I can form no conception of any.* We may, by acting contrary to apostolic example, nourish in our own bosom a spirit of self complacency, and all the bitterness of censorious dictation, than which nothing can be conceived more alien to christianity. We may grieve and exasperate our brethren at the south, and provoke in them

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a spirit of recrimination, equally adverse to christian love. Amidst this unhallowed strife in the household of faith, how is the slave to be benefitted ? When we become more actuated with hatred to the slave owner than with love to the slave, which is the inevitable result of pursuing a course contrary to apostolic example, then the true interests of those in bondage both for time and eternity, will be overlooked and forgotten. When the spirit of christian love is fairly driven from the field by the mutual exasperations of those who are the professed followers of Christ, then the fetters of moral and civil bondage are more firmly rivetted, and the day of final deliverance is postponed indefinitely.

4. I remark in the fourth place, if there is nothing in the manner in which God treated this subject in the days of Moses, nothing in the manner in which Christ treated it during the period of his personal ministry, and nothing in the example of the Apostles which will justify us in denouncing southern christians, and in banishing them beyond the pale of christian communion, then I ask, where do we find our justification for such a course ?

Where is our divine warrant? Do we go back to first principles, and take refuge under the great law of christian benevolence, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself?" But in our application of this law to particular instances, we must take care that we do not fall under the very condemnation which we would confidently pronounce upon others. In all instances of its application, where benevolence of feeling and benevolence of action, are called into vigorous exercise, we are unquestionably safe, for "love worketh no ill to his neighbor." In all instances, however, where feelings of an opposite character, and action of a different nature are suggested, we should instantly pause and examine whether the application we are about to make accords with the spirit of the law itself. If we perceive that the application under review is about to call forth a spirit of censoriousness, and lead us to assume the prerogatives of God and judge our brother, we may be absolutely certain, if we proceed, that we shall violate the law, and fall under its righteous condemnation. Here we should not only pause before we proceed, but diligently inquire, whether in the past exigen-

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cies of human beings, any analagous cases can be found, where God has directed his servants in their application of this law for the regulation of moral action. Such examples, if such there are, we may follow with perfect safety. Happily for us, we have the very examples which we need. We have them in the manner in which God applied this law in the days of Moses, in which our Saviour applied it during his personal ministry, in which the inspired apostles applied it in founding and regulating the christian church in its primitive simplicity and purity. Will it be safe for us to prefer our own opinion to the opinion of God clearly expressed in cases very analagous ?

We are, however, apt to deceive ourselves with plausibilities. Thus the disciples fancied they loved their master so much, that they would be justified in destroying the Samaritans, because they had not treated him with all the respect which seemed to be due. Thus we too, may fancy that we love the slave so much that we shall be justified in treating the slave owner very roughly, if he proceed not to immediate emancipation at the simple instance of our dictation. The disci-

ples might have said, it is a sin not to love the Lord Jesus Christ. Very true. But before you apply this rule to the Samaritans, you must first enlighten them and convince them of their sin. Was it a good way to convince them of sin, to call down the fire of heaven upon them? So we may say slavery is a sin and the slaveholder should immediately repent. Be it so. Before, however, you apply this rule to him, you must enlighten and convince him of his sin. He does not see, nor feel, that it is sinful to hold men under bond service. He has not as yet taken those views of the divine law, which lead him either to see, or feel, that he has done wrong. How can he repent until he is convinced of sin? Would we have him repent, of what we conceive to be a sin, when he does not himself feel it to be a sin? What kind of repentance would that be? Shall we, however, be likely to induce him to take those views of the moral law which will lead him to see that bond service has no warrant from God, by threatening him, denouncing him, and cutting him off from all christian intercourse and communion? While we scold, and threaten, and confidently dictate, he will

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never take that dispassionate survey of the subject, which will lead to correct and enlarged views of his duty. And we may thank ourselves for preventing a candid and christian investigation of the subject on his part.

But aside from the evil influence of this course of dictation and denunciation upon the mind of the slaveholder, it is a direct violation of that fundamental law—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and a grosser violation of it, than even that of slaveholding. The disciples, in the case above alluded to, were for making their own view of duty, a rule of action for the Samaritans, were ready to judge them by that rule, and not only this; so exalted an idea had they of their own infallibility in the premises, that they were for destroying them outright and instantly. Now when we call christians at the south by hard names, and threaten to excommunicate them from the church of God, which is the proper idea of withdrawing communion from them, in what respect do we fail of being actuated by the same spirit? In this instance, we are determined that our own views of duty shall be a rule of action for them, and if they will not

submit their consciences in abject servility to our dictation, we will take signal vengeance on them. We cannot call fire down from heaven upon them. But what we can do, we will do. We will denounce them with opprobrious epithets, we will spurn them from the christian family. Holding men in civil bondage, is innocence when compared with this arrogant dogmatizing over the consciences of others. It is the very spirit of antichrist which has kindled the fires of persecution in every age and drenched the earth with the blood of martyrs. Where in the bible do we find a warrant for indulging such a spirit? Plainly it is a gross violation of the fundamental law of christian benevolence. And if there be no warrant for it in the word of God, then are we necessarily brought back to the simple rule laid down by the Apostle: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputation." We, on account of the more favorable circumstances in which we are placed, may see clearly that it is not in accordance with the spirit of the divine law, to hold men under bond service. Our southern brethren, being placed in circumstances less favorable,

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do not see this. We are to judge of them, not according to the light which we may have, but according to the light which they have received. If they have embraced some of the primary truths of christianity and given their hearts to God, then we are to receive them into peaceable communion, and to cherish them as "faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit."

The above course we should conscientiously pursue, as much from love to the servant, as from love to his christian master. Christianity is the only lever which we have for raising the bondservant to a state of freedom. When therefore we cast off the christians of the south, and separate ourselves from them, we utterly denude ourselves of all power to benefit the slave. It is only through the christian master, that we can reach the bond servant to unclasp his fetters and raise him to the rank of a freeman. How else can we reach him? We have no right to legislate over the conscience of his master. God will not permit us to do it. If the slave ever gains his freedom innocently and with a good conscience, he will gain it by the voluntary action of his master.

If we wish to see slavery abolished, we must labor to have the whole south leavened with the pure spirit of christianity. And evidently the only way in which we can exert an influence in diffusing christianity over the south, is to cherish, encourage, and aid the christians that are there. Instead of calling down the fire of heaven to consume them, we should call down the fire of christian love to warm, and expand, and elevate, and enlarge their hearts.

What but christianity abolished slavery in the north? It was the spirit of christianity that moved upon the face of the community, shed the mild radiance of its blessed light upon all the relations of man, and prepared the public mind for that course of legislation which terminated the existence of bond service. What christianity has done in the north, it will do in the south, provided we do not foolishly and wickedly interfere to retard the progress of its light and extinguish the flame of its rising glory in the turbid waters of human strife. Many christians at the south are fully enlightened upon this subject, and are doing all in their power for the promotion of human freedom. But when

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we who are ignorant of their circumstances, presume to take the reins out of their hands, and treat them with arrogant dictation, their power to do good is greatly paralyzed. What obstacles, our injudicious interference has already thrown in the way of their access to the impenitent mind, is beyond calculation. If we desire the prevalence of freedom, why do we pursue this course and cripple the only agency, which can be made available to an end so much to be desired? Had it not been for our censorious and dictatorial action, ere this, beyond a doubt, Maryland and Kentucky had been free states, and Virginia had been on the eve of emancipation. We have broken the arms of our christian friends at the South, by producing such a fermentation in the public mind there, as wholly to exclude their healthy and efficient action. Why do we pursue a course so injudicious, so contrary to the spirit of christian benevolence? Do we design to coerce the South? This is visionary, if our object is the abolition of bond service. A tyrant power may change the name and form of slavery, but the thing itself will still continue. Christianity, and not coercion, is the

element which alone secures moral and civil freedom to man. Coercion may rouse into action a savage ferocity, produce a plentiful effusion of human gore, and fill the land with the wail of agony, but it will not unclasp the fetters of the slave, nor fit him for the enjoyment of liberty. And when God makes inquisition for blood, in whose skirts will that blood be found, which has been shed by our coercion? Verily we assume a fearful responsibility, when we would coerce the south. How different is this from the course pursued by the holy Apostles of our Lord in a similar case—how different from the course recommended in the language of the Holy Spirit at the head of this discourse. If we really desire the abolition of slavery, we must cordially embrace christians at the south in the fellowship of the gospel, cherish them, encourage them, and aid them in their labors of love. They are as noble spirits as the world can produce, and in proportion to their convictions of duty, as ready as any to make sacrifices for the promotion of truth. Give them the same amount of moral light, the same vantage ground, to influence the public mind, that our fathers enjoyed, and

they will not be slow in bringing the whole system of bond service to a final period. We may suppose them deficient in their views of the moral law, in the extent of its application to human relations, but this is no reason for casting them off. Who is not deficient? "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone."

THE END.